

DOCTORAL THESIS

Conceptualising a visual culture curriculum for Greek art education

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INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND TO RESEARCH AND PROBLEM AREA

Working as a primary school teacher in Greece for ten years and practising icon-painting, aroused my interest in teaching visual arts. From my masters level studies in Art, Craft and Design Education at Roehampton University, I learned that if art education is to be a meaningful experience and contribute to the life of my students art has to be taught as part of the culture in which it is produced. In addition, I started to think about the way students in present day society construct multiple and overlapping identities and live within complex social environments permeated by visual images that art teachers could use to enhance art content and practice (Freedman, 2003b; Duncum, 2002a; Pauly, 2001).

The explosion in production and consumption of visual imagery in post-industrial societies everywhere along with technological and economic developments, has led to a significant rise in the influence of visual images on the construction of consciousness and creation of knowledge about self and the world (Tavin & Hausman, 2004; Boughton *et al*, 2002). On the other hand, the infusion of visual arts into daily life through advertisements, newspapers, magazines, television, and the Internet, raises questions about the role institutions play in presenting information and ideas, and about ways individuals can see and understand imagery and reflect upon what they see (Duncum, 2003b). Reflecting on these contemporary realities stimulated my interest in visual culture and ways in which it might be introduced into primary art education in Greece. So, I decided to investigate what kind of curriculum reform was needed.

ISSUES IN GREEK ART EDUCATION

Art in Greek primary schools is a compulsory subject taught by generalist primary teachers on the same day each week, usually towards the end of the school day (Labitsi, 2000; Council of Europe, 2003). It occupies a small proportion of the total curriculum time. This results in it being regarded by a significant number of teachers as a leisure time activity, or a reward for students after 'real school work' is completed (Labitsi, 2000). According to Droulia (personal communication, January 4, 2004), many teachers engage their students in art activities that have little educational value (e.g. colouring in photocopied drawings), or use the time allocated for it in the national curriculum for supplementary teaching of other subjects, usually maths or language.

Labitsi (2000, p.148) argues that it is quite common for generalist teachers not to plan art lessons. This probably happens because art is misinterpreted as a 'play' activity, or because its role in general education and child development has been undermined (Lancaster, 1990; Field, 1972). Moreover, the fact that art curricula in Greece lack structure, continuity and consistency means that students may be not given opportunities to achieve the goals set out in the national curriculum. According to Christopoulou (2004), and Labitsi (2000), the majority of Greek teachers mainly concentrate on two-dimensional practical work. It is likely they prefer drawing, painting, construction with paper and wood, and collage because two-dimensional materials are relatively cheap and easy to manage. According to Lancaster (1990), an imbalance between two and three-dimensional activities, such as printmaking, pottery and weaving, is commonplace in most education systems. Art appreciation, art criticism, and art history tend to be neglected in Greek art education because primary school teachers lack confidence in their ability to teach art theory (Droulia, 2004; Christopoulou, 2004). So, the art curriculum is rather narrow and unbalanced. Moreover, the content of the official 'Teacher's Guidebook for Aesthetic Education (1985), which was in use until 2003, was wholly practical. Whereas it recommended practical activities and provided practical guidelines for using media and techniques, it neglected art history, art criticism and aesthetics. However, until 2003 it was the only substantial assistance offered to Greek primary teachers by the state to help them teach art (Labitsi, 2000).

Droulia (2004), Christopoulou (2004), and Labitsi (2000) claim that generalist primary teachers in Greece lack confidence in their ability to teach art because of their limited or inadequate initial art training at pedagogical academies or education departments in universities. This training focuses mainly on acquisition of practical skills and knowledge about Western fine art movements and styles. It also focuses on the application of a few selected techniques and media suitable for use in primary schools, such as watercolours and collage (School Curriculum, 2005, Education Department at Aristoteleio University). So, it is not surprising that Greek teachers often restrict their art lessons to practical activities and offer narrow art education to their students. They have a limited practical and theoretical educational background, few opportunities for in-service training, and there is a lack of specialist art advisors or coordinators to help them. In addition, the absence of experimental work, curriculum research, and/or specialist art education journals means they are unaware of international trends and developments in art education. It is worth mentioning that educational websites for teachers in Greece (Appendix 1) offer extensive educational resources and articles for Maths, Language, Geography and History subjects but not art (www.e-yliko.gr; www.e-selides.gr; www.epyna.gr, www.daskalos.edu.gr). A search (April-June 2005) found only a few suggestions for practical art activities (18 for drawing, 16 for constructions with paper, and 3 for Christmas decoration, only in www.daskalos.edu.gr). They were how-to-do-it guidelines lacking any theoretical framework (Appendix 1a). In addition, a few suggestions for interdisciplinary projects that include art activities were found in South Aegean Educational Portal (www.epyna.gr; Appendix 1b).

Recent Curriculum Reform

Educational reforms in Greece are connected to socio-economic and political changes and usually involve modifications and adjustments to the structure and organisation of the educational system (Flouris, 1983). However, the national curriculum is not a subject to frequent reform. Although in the past fifty years five major educational reforms took place (1959, 1964, 1967, 1981/85 and 2003), the national curriculum was reformed only twice in 1981/85 and 2003 (Flouris, 1983; Vrettos & Kapsalis, 1997).

In 2003 a new curriculum proposed by the Greek Pedagogical Institute (PI) was published in the Government Gazette (FEK issue B, nr. 303 & 304/13.3.2003). According to Alahiotis (2002a, 2003), PI's President at that time, this was a revision of a proposal submitted to the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs (MNERA) in 2000 and published in Government Gazette in 18 October 2001 (FEK issue B, nr1366/18.10.2001 and FEK issue B, nr 1373-6/18.10.2001). This proposal was revised on the basis of feedback given by the educational community, e.g. teachers, educational advisors, and universities, and an evaluation of pilot studies conducted in 900 primary schools. However, according to Grollios (2004), neither the findings of the pilot studies nor the criticisms of the educational community were published. On the other hand, close study and comparison of the two documents reveal they do not have any marked differences in aims and content, or even writing style.

According to Droulia (2004), a national curriculum reflects and tries to solve problems that occur at a particular point of time in a particular educational system. In 2002, an introductory note to the new national curriculum by Alahiotis described these as follows:

The fact that we live in an information and knowledge society...Changes in social construction, the growing tendency for globalisation, multicultural reality and strong competition that appears in all sectors of social activity are conditions that make the redefinition of the role of the school necessary. At the same time, the aim of school education should be restated as follows: the development of a strong and pedagogically sound school environment that will facilitate the smooth and successful integration of pupils in society (p.5).

The Greek Pedagogical Institute, who designed the NC, seems to take into account social, political, financial and cultural changes such as scientific and technological developments, and the immigration flux that happened in Greece and/or worldwide the past decades. However, Grollios (2004) noted that it chose to exclude other social changes, such as expansion of poverty and environmental destruction. In order to adapt to these changes proponents of the new curriculum like Matsagouras (2002), Panagakos (2002), Karatzia-Stavlioti (2002) and Alahiotis (2002b) emphasised the need to: (i) integrate school content knowledge through and around universal themes ('universalia') that would offer children a holistic view of the world; (ii) connect schooling with their life experiences and make school knowledge meaningful to them; and (iii) adopt inquiry-based teaching methods that would help them construct knowledge and acquire skills over time. These suggestions derive from

assumptions about what kinds of abilities are required for life in the twenty-first century. However, in my view these aims are unrealistic because they contradict the current structure of the Greek education system.

The new national curriculum (2003) emphasises both ‘interdisciplinarity’ and ‘cross-thematic integration’ and seeks to reduce the negative effects of teacher-centred and fragmented-knowledge-based education (Alahiotis, 2002a, 2002b; Matsagouras, 2002; Panagakos 2002). It consists of two parts: (i) a ‘Cross-Curricular/Thematic Framework’ (CCTF); and (ii) ‘Individual Subject Curricula’ (Syllabi; ISC), one for each school subject. The CCTF tries to diminish the borders between the different school subjects and presents knowledge as a unified totality that is taught through themes (e.g. the life cycle, identity, etc). While the ‘Syllabi; ISC’ distinguishes between school subjects, it tries to link their content through educational activities (Alahiotis, 2002a, 2002b; Matsagouras, 2002; Panagakos 2002).

Noutsos (2004), Therianos (2003a, 2003b) and Grollios (2004) argue that the new national curriculum tries to control knowledge offered in schools and is too analytical and prescriptive to leave room for creative lesson planning. They also argue that it is very similar to the previous curriculum of 1981. Therianos (2003a) notes that ‘universalia’ in Cross-Curricular/Thematic Framework are more like concepts rather than themes or issues. This suggests that the Pedagogical Institute regards cross-thematic integration more as teaching about common concepts, like family life and community organisation, found in individual school subjects rather than investigating themes that address human concerns like identity, dreams and life cycle. Grollios (2004) agrees with Therianos (ibid) that CCTF/ISC compartmentalises school knowledge because it suggests that ‘universalia’ should be taught through the different school subjects.

The CCTF/ISC also introduced the ‘Flexible Zone’, which is known for educational projects that promote cross-thematic teaching (Alahiotis, 2002a). Grollios & Liampas (2001) and Grollios (2004) argue that the 10% of total curriculum time that is allocated to this zone is not enough. They also argue that the way school time is allotted to subjects contradicts the

philosophy of the CCTF. The CCTF/ISC has been criticised for ignoring the structure of the school system, which is determined by entry examinations for universities as well as by student external assessment, and the lack of a co-operative and collaborative culture among teachers, which has emerged as a consequence of there being so many part-time teachers in schools (Therianos, 2003a).

The Pedagogical Institute tried to reform primary education by promoting ‘student centred’ and ‘creative learning’ through the CCTF/ISC in 2003. However, they neglected to address fundamental problems, such as the lack of infrastructure and finance, inflexibility of school programmes, and strict governmental control of curriculum aims, content and materials. Consequently, the Greek Teachers’ Union reacted strongly to enforcement of the ‘Flexible Zone’ project in 2005 and refused to include it in the school programme (DOE, 73/8-9-05). Lack of in-service training and preparation were the main reasons it was rejected together with the CCTF/ISC. It may also be the case that primary teachers were reluctant to embrace these changes because they had built their professional identities along a separate school subject approach. So, MNERA postponed the implementation of CCTF/ISC and ‘Flexible Zone’ in the school year 2005-2006 and announced that new student and teacher-guide books would be delivered to schools in 2006-2007 (encyclical letter, 5/10/05; Liatsou, 2005). However, the ones for art education were not delivered until September 2007.

‘Cross-Curricular/Thematic Framework’ and ‘Individual Curriculum’ for Art

In this section, I review and compare the ‘Cross-Curricular/Thematic Framework’ and ‘Individual Curriculum’ for art in order to identify similarities and differences. I also compare them with the old NC (1981) to determine any changes made.

The ‘Cross-Curricular/Thematic Framework’ for art as well as for every other school subject consists of:

- (i) general teaching/learning aims for the subject
- (ii) detailed guiding principles that determine the content of lessons
- (iii) detailed general goals referring to skills, knowledge, attitudes and values that should be achieved by pupils

- (iv) indicative fundamental cross-thematic concepts e.g. ‘material’, ‘colour’, ‘balance’, ‘culture’, ‘tradition’, ‘space’, ‘similarity’/‘difference’, etc (CCTF/ISC, 2003, p.23).

On the other hand, the ‘Individual Subject Curricula’ for each school subject as well as for art consist of:

- (i) cognitive, affective and psycho-kinetic objectives that constitute the guidelines for planning the content of lessons and assessment of student achievement;
- (ii) detailed teaching units, the content of which is arranged in a spiral way in order to avoid overlapping and repetition from each grade level to the next. These include examples like plasticine, art forms, local art, contemporary art, comics, illustration, digital photography, etc;
- (iii) indicative learning activities, which are classified as: subject-oriented or cross-thematic activities (e.g. drawing and painting, collage, classroom decoration, artworks interpretation, etc); and
- (iv) supplementary cross-thematic projects that contain broader thematic units, such as ‘Byzantine Art’, and ‘Illustrating a traditional fairy-tale’ (CCTF/ISC, 2003, p.23-24).

Alahiotis (2003) claims that the design of both the ‘Cross-Curricular/Thematic Framework’ and ‘Individual Subject Curriculum’ for art was based on constructivist theory that understands knowledge as socially constructed. According to Salvaras (1999), this kind of curriculum emphasises knowledge production and acquisition and simplifies the content by stressing its basic characteristics or concepts. It also sets out short and long-term objectives that determine the teaching and learning process as well as the cognitive and meta-cognitive skills students should acquire. However, Argiropoulou, (2001), Grollios (2004), and Dagklis (2001) argue that the CCTF/ISC were developed in accordance with behaviouristic theory because they propose that learning objectives should be measured by assessing student achievement and teachers’ efficiency. They also include strict guidelines about appropriate teaching and learning methods and content and dictate much of the way that teachers should develop their art programmes.

A comparison of the general educational aims in the ‘Cross-Curricular/Thematic Framework’ about art and these in the art ‘Individual Subject Curriculum’ (Table A and B)

revealed that ISC repeats and expands on the CCTF's aims. Both CCTF and ISC emphasise art appreciation and understanding, skills development, creativity, familiarity with media, materials and techniques, analysis and interpretation of art works, and art's relationship to culture as the main aims of art education. Moreover, ISC describes the cognitive, affective and psycho-kinetic objectives, teaching units, indicative learning activities and thematic units in a more detailed way than CCTF. However, the CCTF/ISC does not give much autonomy to teachers to plan their own art lessons and offers easy answers and recipes. It does not encourage teachers to take risks and experiment, for example, with media and techniques other than those already proposed in the documents. For example, on page 135, ISC suggests that lessons about art history should include discussion about art movements focusing on one or two artworks, presentation of biographical information about artists, questions, and quizzes.

A comparison of the general aims of CCTF/ISC with the national curriculum of 1981 (Table A) reveals that both curricula are formalistic. However, the CCTF/ISC also accentuates the cultural and historical role of art, whereas the old national curriculum (1981) emphasised creativity, subjective self-expression, and development of hand-skills. CCTF/ISC does afford equal importance to creative expression and performance, art perception and appreciation, interpretation and criticism, and to learning about the historical and cultural contexts of artworks. It also subscribes, in part, to international trends by seeking to: (i) extend the range of subject matter to include more diverse forms of arts, such as comics, photography, and digital imagery (CCTF/ISC, 2003, p.134); (ii) give children opportunities to talk about and understand the role of art in everyday life; and (iii) enhance art lessons by using students' life experiences and knowledge from a range of other disciplines (ibid, p.136).

Tables A and B show there are contradictions in the aims and content of the CCTF/ISC. Developing children's creativity, imagination and hand-skills is incompatible with extending the content of art education to include cultural learning, aesthetics and art criticism. The definition of cultural learning is limited to learning mainly about Greek arts and culture. For example on page 126, the CCTF/ISC stipulates that teaching about Greek cultural heritage is

important to ensure students learn to appreciate national culture (CCTF/ISC, 2003, p.126). Teaching about Western fine arts is promoted on the grounds that students should learn about modern, 20th century fine art created by famous European artists such as Picasso, Magritte, Monet and Kandinsky (ibid, p.131). However, this contradicts the suggestions that teachers and students should challenge the boundaries of art and making (ibid, p.6; p.136). Modernist and postmodernist ideas about art education co-exist as the CCTF/ISC tries to introduce current ideas in the international literature.

Modernist, formalist approaches to art education predominate in the student textbooks for art for Grades 1-2, 3-4 and 5-6 (Appendix 2) and art criticism and aesthetics are neglected. Art history is recommended only for Grades 5-6, and the vast majority of artists mentioned are from Europe, Greece and the USA. The content focuses on 'high' art and Western art movements ranging from realism and expressionism to pop-art and arte povera. Only brief reference is made to everyday forms of cultural production like commercial art, comics, and graphic design, or to art from other cultures. The books also ask children to engage in practical activities like drawing, painting, collage, paper and wood construction, clay-making, printing and mask-making and provide them with how-to-do guidelines. They also include examples of children's works. These in my view may lead students to copy ideas or works presented in the books and produce unimaginative, homogeneous outcomes.

Table A: General Aims of Art Education in CCTF/ISC (2003) and NC (1981)

CCTF (2003, p. 69; online English language version)	Individual Subject Curriculum (2003, p. 126; translated by researcher)	National Curriculum (NC, 1981, cited in Labitsi, 2000, p.10-11)
Pupils should:		
Become familiar with and develop their understanding and appreciation of art	Develop their potential through observation, research and experimentation with and use a range of materials, and creation of their own artworks	Express freely and spontaneously their thoughts, opinions and feelings through their own artworks
Develop the necessary skills in order to enjoy art and artworks Both as artists and as viewers	Become familiar with a range of techniques and media in order to express their own ideas, feelings, thoughts and experiences	Develop their potential in the use of art media starting with easy-to-use materials and simple techniques
Develop their creative imagination, produce their own works of art and participate in activities involving visual arts and artwork	Become familiar with the visual language, art forms and symbols artists use	Become able through research, experimentation and critical thinking to search and discover many different solutions
Become familiar with and experiment with a range of materials, media, tools and re-sources in the various forms of visual art	Look at, understand and enjoy visual art, and acquire a positive attitude towards the works of art	Produce work which will aim to satisfy their personal and artistic aptitudes and cultivate 'hand-skills that are useful for the practical needs of life
Respond to, appreciate, understand, analyse and evaluate artworks and art in general	Become familiar with, understand and learn how to interpret a variety of artworks in order to judge and value Greek and universal cultural heritage (p.126)	Distinguish and enjoy colours art forms, textures and other qualities of artworks
Relate art to its cultural context and realize its contribution to civilization through time		Be introduced and become familiar with as many materials, media and techniques as possible
Make cross-thematic links to other curriculum subjects		Become sensitive to the visual, tactile and other properties of objects
		Learn about past, contemporary art forms from Greece and other Countries
		Acquire social skills through team-work

Table B: Content of Art Education in CCTF/ISC (2003) and NC (1981)

CCTF (2003, p. 69-72; online English language version)	Individual Subject Curriculum (2003, p. 126; translated by researcher)	National Curriculum (NC, 1981, translated by researcher)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Basic materials-media-techniques• Visual elements• Different forms of visual arts• Subject-Content-Meaning• History of arts-Artists• Introduction to aesthetics, aesthetic values, evaluation and analysis of a work of art	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Materials- Media-Techniques• Visual elements• Different forms of visual arts: sketch, painting, drawing, pottery, weaving, doll-making, stencils, collage, mobiles, print-making, maquette -making, wood-carving, comics, photography, digital imagery, sculpture, illustration• Subject-Content-Meaning• Works of art- Artists-History of Art• Introduction to aesthetics, aesthetic values, and evaluation and analysis of a work of art• Critical analysis of works of art	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Materials- Media-Techniques• Visual elements• Subject matter-Meaning• Art forms: sketch, painting, drawing, pottery, weaving, doll-making, stencils, collage, mobiles, print-making, maquette -making, wood-carving, comics• History of art-famous artists, artworks, art movements• Aesthetics-Art criticism

Students' Everyday Life Experience in Formal Schooling

According to American art educators (Freedman, 2003a, 2003b; Zander, 2006), children's life experiences have been neglected in art and in general education in the past and little attention was paid to ways they construct their identities visually. It seems that formal schooling privileges some life experiences that are judged to be superior over others (Arthur, 2001; Kindler, 2003). For example, museum visits and reading books are understood to contribute to children's development whereas those connected to television viewing and computer games are seen to have negative effects. The same educators argue that the art curriculum ought to do more to address the influential role of visual images in everyday life. Because they perceive visual imagery as one of the most pervasive forms of communication, they claim that children should examine in art lessons the role it plays in ways they imagine, construct, or transform their self-concepts and identities (Pauly, 2001). They object to the

way formal education is reduced to disciplinary parameters that have little to do with everyday cultural experience. Moreover, they argue that transmission of information should no longer be the main mode of classroom teaching because it does not help learners engage actively and purposefully enough in their own learning (Salmon, 1995).

In Greece at the time this research began the content of art lessons mainly comprised a canon of Western fine arts, with which the majority of children were not familiar. It ignored the mass-produced visual images they consumed enthusiastically in their everyday lives (Vryzas, 1997; Panousis, 2004; Panaekas 1998). According to Diamantakou (2004), schooling marginalises mass-produced visual images because teachers are consumed by worry about how to talk about and teach them. Fears about commercialisation of the curriculum and promoting consumer culture are commonly expressed by educators in Greece and internationally. Alahiotis (2003), the President of Pedagogical Institute from 2000 since 2004, for example, stressed that mass media and the Internet circulate information and knowledge that is of no educational value. He also argued that it is essential schools strengthen their influential role on children's socialisation and identity construction by providing them with appropriate information and knowledge. That explains why schooling tries to defend its role by 'protecting' children from the impact of mass-produced images and censoring their experiences of mass-media and popular culture for being too superficial (Grosdos & Dagiou, 1999).

However, education occurs outside as well as inside classrooms. This is why the curriculum should be connected to life in the real world. Acknowledging that children construct knowledge outside school implies that the cultural sites in which they are engaged, as part of their everyday lives, should be central to the educational procedure (Freedman, 2003a; Heise, 2004, p.41). This is the main reason why art educators in America, Australia, and many countries in Europe have been arguing that it is necessary to expand art education to include 'visual culture': namely the visual world of contemporary societies (Boughton *et al*, 2002; Freedman, 2003b; Duncum, 2002b; Aguirre, 2004). By this, they mean that analysis and interpretation of visual images from popular and mass media culture should play a central role in the educational procedure.

According to Freedman (2003a), Heise (2004) and Efland (2002), it is important to offer students opportunities to construct, reconstruct and communicate meanings that have personal significance. It is also crucial to help them acquire the skills and attitudes that are necessary for interpreting visual culture and making informed choices as consumers. It is important teachers be informed about children's patterns of consumption, preferences and life experiences so that can use them as a basis for art educational content.

THE CASE FOR EXPANDING THE CONCEPT OF ART EDUCATION

At the time the research began, the social context for art education internationally and in Greece was changing rapidly. Conceptions of art were altering and expanding, and the boundaries that informed students' understanding of art forms and practices, technology, cultural values and self-understanding were in a state of flux. Leading North American art educators, such as Stuhr (2003) and Freedman (2003a; 2003b), were arguing that one of main aims of art education should be to help students make sense of themselves and their worlds in the present and imagine possibilities for changing themselves and society in the future. This implies that art education, like all other school subjects, should be connected to students' life experiences, and that designing curricula should be viewed as an ongoing process that prepares them for lifelong learning (Stuhr, 2003). It also implies that teachers should link art with other areas of knowledge and offer children opportunities to engage in and experience visual culture (Emery, 2002).

The term 'visual culture' has been used by art theorists to describe a turn in post-industrial societies towards the 'visual'. It has been also adopted by art educators in North America, such as Freedman (2003b), Duncum (2001a, 2002a), Boughton *et al* (2002) and Tavin (2002) to signify the need to include and analyse a wider range of cultural forms in art lessons and help students interpret their multiple meanings. North American scholars in art education also suggest that in order to respond to contemporary learners' needs, art educators and generalist teachers should not only redefine the context and the aims of art education but also rename it 'visual culture education'. So, according to their suggestions teachers should attempt to:

- enrich children's knowledge about the creation of visual images and cultural sites, products and processes of mediation between people
- develop their critical understanding about their role in individual's identity construction
- help them use their artistic practices as cultural and personal responses to their visual experiences and define themselves through their artworks
- enable them to apply what is learned in school to everyday life.

Thus, they believe that children should be encouraged to examine and decode visual imagery from their daily environment like film, photography, comics, the Internet, computer games, displays in shopping malls, theme parks, television and advertisements. There is an argument that by doing this children will develop critical viewing practices and communicative skills and learn how to investigate and understand the relationship between images, identity and culture (Tavin & Anderson, 2003; Stokrocki, 2002; Tavin, 2002; Freedman & Schuler, 2002). Although it is not clear how this can be achieved I agree with these art educators that examination of visual imagery from popular and mass media culture in art lessons may give students opportunities to further develop their thinking and become critical viewers. However, this has not yet been proved.

At the time the research began, achieving such aims in practice was difficult because the concept of visual culture education still lacked clarity and was often misunderstood (Stankiewicz, 2004). Visual culture education covers many different kinds of visual forms and requires knowledge from other disciplines such as sociology, cultural studies and mass-media studies. Although prominent art educators in the USA promote visual culture, it has not yet been framed within national or state policy (Stankiewicz, 2004). My preliminary reading of this literature revealed that there was confusion about the aims and the content of visual culture education. Although the Greek CCTF/ISC (2003) subscribed in principle to this international trend, it was doubtful whether generalist teachers would be willing or able to include visual culture in their art lessons without assistance from the state.

SUMMARY PROBLEM STATEMENT

In 2003, the Greek national curriculum for art subscribed in part to a recent trend towards visual culture education in the international literature. Specifically it sought to extend the content of art lessons to include not only fine art but also mass media and popular culture. However, there was a gap between policy and practice. Preliminary research established that there had been no research on visual culture education theory and practice in Greece or on children's visual and aesthetic experiences in everyday life. Before the Greek art curriculum could be expanded to include visual culture, it was necessary to establish what international literature suggested about the aims, content, methods and resources for teaching visual culture education and its strengths and weaknesses. It was essential to find out also more about visual culture genres existing in Greece, how children viewed and experienced them and how they used them to construct knowledge about themselves and their worlds. It was also necessary to establish whether including their experiences of specific visual culture genres in art lessons can extend primary age children's understanding of ways they influence their identity construction. Finally, it was crucial to begin to explore possible problems and issues that curriculum planners might need to take into account before they introduce visual culture to students.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

So, this research reported in this thesis set out to answer the following questions:

1. What is the nature of a visual culture education?
2. What kind of curriculum framework is most suited to delivering visual culture education in Greek primary schools?
3. What are Greek primary age children's experiences of and preferences for visual culture and how aware are they of its impact on their lives?
4. What strategies could teachers in Greece use to help them to understand the impact of visual culture on identity construction?

CHAPTER OUTLINES

This Introduction has described the intentions and goals of Greek art education presented in the new national curriculum (CCTF/ISC, 2003) and has identified a gap between policy and

practice. It established that children's everyday visual and aesthetic experiences are not integrated into art education internationally and in Greece. It specified five main research questions that informed the research.

Chapter 1 reports on a review of literature on visual culture, identity and visual culture education; it presents a rationale for the importance to integrate visual images from popular and mass media culture in the art curriculum; and reports the findings of relevant review of literature about curriculum content, methods and resources.

Chapter 2 discusses the design of the first part of the research, which involved group interviews with children. It reports on the target population and sampling, interview schedule, design of visual research tool, method of data analysis, and discusses ethical considerations. It also reports the findings of pilot studies.

Chapter 3 describes the data collected during group interviews conducted in Greek primary schools and Chapter 4 interprets the interview data. In particular, it communicates difficulties the children experienced naming and classifying visual culture genres, the dominance of TV image in their everyday life, the impact of visual culture on their everyday activities and construction of identity, and difficulties they faced understanding this impact. This chapter after the findings also examines the implications for the second part of the research.

Chapter 5 discusses the design of the educational intervention, which was the second part of the research. It presents a rationale for choosing thematic case study design, reports on the selection of cases and discusses some limitations of this kind of research. It also describes the choice of teaching strategy, design of the lesson unit, method of data collection and analysis, and ethical considerations. Chapter 6 outlines the context for the educational intervention. It reports on the two interventions that took place in a Greek primary school in Athens and students' responses to them.

Chapter 7 constitutes an interpretation of the case study data and includes an evaluation of the planning, content, activities, mode of delivery, organisation and operation of the lessons and their impact on the children's learning. Finally, Chapter 8 synthesises the findings of both parts of the research, arrives in conclusions and reflects on the research methodology. It also explores the implications for art education generally and for Greece and discusses the contribution of the research to the field of art and visual culture education.

CHAPTER 1

VISUAL CULTURE EDUCATION: WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Introduction pointed out that visual culture is increasingly infused into everyday life. It also stated that schooling still neglects children's experience of visual culture and ignores the ways it affects construction of their identities. A specific research problem was defined and main research questions were formulated. However, before proceeding with the design of research, it was necessary to review relevant literature in more depth in order to determine and discuss the current state of knowledge about the chosen topic.

The literature review was an active process of construction that involved defining the field in which the research was located. Drawing on Allison's (1997) ideas about the purpose of reviewing literature, it set out to gain a full and in-depth understanding of how visual culture education could be introduced in Greek primary education. It also set out to establish the theoretical research context so that the findings could add to the existing sum of knowledge about visual culture education. Finally it aimed to enable me arrive at conclusions at end of the research.

The research questions posed at the start provided the framework for identifying the main themes/concepts of this study and searching out literature. Key texts about visual culture, identity, visual culture education, and curriculum development were reviewed in order to determine what authors had said about visual culture as a means of conveying meanings, prototypes, values and codes that contribute to the construction of identity and the ways this can be taught.

Since very little had been written in Greece either about visual culture or visual culture education the review concentrated mainly in literature from the UK, Europe and North America. However, literature from Greece on identity, mass media and popular culture was also identified and examined (Vryzas, 1997; Panousis, 2004; Panaekas, 1998; Grosdos & Dagiou, 1999; Ibrinteli, 2002). The selection criteria were as follows: the texts should be: (i) legible and clear, (ii) targeted at researchers and academics in education and/or teachers, (iii) provide evidence of empirical research, and (iv) be related to the main concepts of this study.

Before accessing the literature, I compiled a list of known resources relevant to the research topic. Keeping in mind the research questions was important during the search. Indexes, databases, bibliographies and websites were searched in order to identify relevant resources (Appendix 3). As visual culture education is a recent trend, most of these texts were located in articles in specialist journals, such as the *International Journal of Art and Design Education*, *Studies in Art Education*, and *Art Education* published between 2000 and 2007. Because, over 150 texts and articles about visual culture and visual culture education were found during the search, a need was identified to develop a systematic method for reviewing the most important of them. So, I developed a reading log, which facilitated recording different kinds of information, bibliographic details, the relationship of this to other readings, and critical analysis (Appendix 4). This enabled me to review more than 50 texts and articles about visual culture and visual culture education in depth.

This chapter discusses the findings of the literature review and is organised around three main themes: the importance of visual culture in identity construction, the rationale for and aims of visual culture education, and development of a visual culture curriculum. It also defines key terms used in this study, such as ‘visual culture’ and ‘identity’ and discusses possible strategies, content and teaching methods authors identified as appropriate for developing and implementing visual culture curricula for primary level. The review set out to evaluate these concepts, theories and methodologies and develop a theoretical framework for use in the empirical research.

1.2. VISUAL CULTURE AND IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

1.2.1 Definition of ‘Visual Culture’

According to Elkins (2003), the term ‘visual culture’ was introduced in the international art literature for first time by Baxandall in 1972. Since then it has been widely used by scholars in cultural and media studies as well as in education and refers to both a discipline and an object of study (Walker & Chaplin, 1997). Recently scholars in art education introduced the term ‘visual culture education’. Because ‘visual culture’ is the main concern of this research, it was necessary to arrive at an operational definition.

According to Pauly (2001) and Stankiewicz (2004), visual culture scholars have drawn on ideas from art history, art education, philosophy and cultural, gender, and mass-media studies and offer overlapping definitions of what it is. Elkins (2003) points out that although they recognise the centrality of visual experience in everyday life their definitions of ‘visual culture’ vary. Some of them direct their studies toward examination of the impact of mass media on the globalisation of visual experience, others to the philosophic interrogation of vision and visibility, and still others engage in a social critique of current art making practices (ibid, p. 17).

Walker & Chaplin (1997) use the adjective ‘visual’ in order to exclude other objects of cultural studies such as poetry, literature, cookery and artworks that appeal to the senses of smell and hearing. They understand visual culture as an ‘immense corpus’ of material artefacts, images, time based-media, and performances and provide a long list (Appendix, 5) of what it includes (ibid, p.1-2). Similarly, Barnard (2001, p.2) understands ‘visual culture’ as the variety of visible two- and three-dimensional objects that people produce and consume in their lives. On the other hand, Sturken & Cartwright (2001) view it as a method for understanding how meanings are produced through images. For Sturken & Cartwright ‘visual culture’, which includes every aspect of culture manifested in visual form, is also a way of understanding the socio-cultural context in which visual images are produced. Likewise, Mitchell (1994) suggests that ‘visual culture’ is concerned with the study of the social construction of visual images. Mirzoeff (1999, p.3), on the other hand, understands it not as a product but as a *tactic* concerned with the interaction between viewers and viewed,

which he calls 'visual events'. He focuses on individual and group responses to visual images as well as on the determining role of 'visual culture' in the wider culture in which it belongs.

Rogoff (1998; 2000) among others has identified three components of visual culture: (a) visual images and their history, (ii) viewing apparatuses people have in their disposal that are guided by cultural models and technologies, and (iii) subjectivities, such as identity and desire, from which people view and interpret images and appropriate their meanings. She understands 'visual culture' as the study of the visual world, focusing either on ways in which visual images may affect meaning production, mould aesthetic values, promote gender stereotypes and reinforce power relations within a society, or, ways people consume and interpret them (1998, p.14). Although, she recognises the role of images in circulating meanings, conveying information, affording pleasure or displeasure, influencing people's life styles or determining consumption, her main interest is in the reception of images. So, for Rogoff it is important to set up questions about the 'visual language' individuals use in order to look at or not look at images, and to study ways they understand their looking and how they use images produced by culturally specific groups to identify themselves.

In summary 'visual culture' is understood in two ways: (i) as the visual world of contemporary societies, which constitutes the entire spectrum of visual images and artefacts people produce and consume in their everyday lives, and (ii) the study of vision and the visual world as it pertains to spectatorship, production and meaning interpretation. According to Becker (1999), the starting point is to think about visual culture as visual images, artefacts and cultural productions. Beyond that, it involves studying and analysing images within systems of cultural knowledge as well as the social and cultural conditions in which they are produced and seen. This is essential because the products of visual culture, which saturate public and private spaces and are consumed consciously or unconsciously, seem to influence people's perceptions of the world they inhabit. It also seems they play a significant role in identity construction.

1.2.2 Research into Identity

According to Berzonsky *et al* (2003, p.112), identity serves as a conceptual framework within which individuals interpret their own personal experiences and negotiate the meaning, purpose and direction of their own lives. Cheek (1989) and Triandis (1989) suggest there are three identity domains: (i) social, (ii) personal and (iii) collective. Social identity is built on public self-elements, such as popularity or reputations that are managed by others. This is the view individuals have of themselves. They develop it by monitoring their behaviour alongside standards set up by others and making social comparisons (Hargreaves *et al*, 2002). Personal identity is grounded in personal values, goals, and self-knowledge. Collective identity, on the other hand, is centred in the expectations and norms set by significant others or referent groups such as family, community, country, and religion, and is linked to a commitment to referent groups (Berzonsky *et al*, 2003). It seems that collective identity can be decomposed to national, ethnic, and cultural.

According to De Vos (1995) and Berry *et al* (1992), ‘ethnic’ identity implies a sense of common origins, common beliefs and values. It also originates in a common feeling of survival that brings together members of a group. A subjective or imagined sense of belonging is important in uniting people into self-defining groups because it gives them a feeling of security and contributes to their well-being. Commonalities in language and religion, as well as shared perceptions of historical continuity and ancestry, or place of origin contribute to the formation of individual and group ethnic identity. In the earliest periods of an individual’s socialization, these elements form ethnic attachments that strengthen self-esteem (Yinger, 1986). The same elements may also contribute to the formation of national identity, as happens in the case of Greece, where national identity is equated with ethnicity (Frangoudaki & Dragona, 1997; Avdela, 1997). De Vos (1995) explains that for many people national and ethnic identities are tied together and cannot be distinguished. For Greek people ethnic myths, symbols, traditions, language, religious beliefs, and a perception of ‘Greekness’, a notion that refers to common origins and ancestry, have been transformed into national sentiments through a process of narrating the continuity of Greek culture as a historical event. This has have unified national and ethnic identities into ‘Greek identity’ (Triantafyllidou *et al*, 1997; Ibrinteli, 2002). However,

national identity is a narrower concept than ethnic identity as it is linked to the geographical territory in which a nation exists (De Vos, 1995).

Researchers, like Ballengee-Morris & Stuhr (2001), understand cultural identity as a broader concept in that it is constituted by age, gender and sexuality, social and economic class, education and job, geographic location, religion and language, political status, and ethnicity. According to Ferdman (2000), cultural identity is established at two levels: group and individual. At a group level, it is an image/convention shared with other members of a given group that helps individuals to distinguish themselves from 'others'. In other words individuals personalise the group to which they belong as they participate in its customs, rituals or activities. At a personal/individual level, cultural identity is the reflection of a culture as it is constructed by the individuals themselves (Ferdman, 2000, p.20).

However, some postmodern theorists understand identities as myths or illusions, which are constructs of social, linguistic and cultural influences (Kellner, 1995). Identity is never fixed or static and can be considered as the totality of multiple self-concepts or self-images (Hargreaves *et al*, 2002) constructed by particular influences under specific situations and reconstructed throughout an individual's life. Freud (2001) argues that different contexts, life parts, or even political circumstances highlight different aspects of the self and can change one's identity. So, identity construction is an active, complex, self-organising and meaning making process, which is embedded in and mediated by a given society and culture.

In this study, identity was understood to constitute a mix of local, regional, national, ethnic, cultural, and personal components. Identities were also understood as constructed over extensive periods of time and ever changing in the sense that individuals/learners update them as they move through psychological and cognitive stages of development, or different parts of their lives. Because the process of identity construction occurs in relation to others (i.e. family, friends, colleagues, etc) and involves discovering the meaning of everyday experiences, the socio-cultural and personal resources individuals use to create the meanings that inform their identities have a particular significance. So, when we talk about identity

construction it is necessary to think about who or what, in people's life-worlds, influences them and forms and informs their identities.

1.2.3 Effects of Visual Culture on Identity Construction

According to Kellner (1995) and Vryzas (1997), identities are shaped not only by families, schools and the small communities to which individuals belong but also by visual images, especially those from popular culture and mass media. Brown *et al* (1994) and Rogoff (1998) point out that visual images embody symbols, myths, values and norms as well as provide a range of role models through which individuals and groups construct, maintain, and express their own self-concepts. In complex modern societies, visual images carry significant messages about cultural norms, beliefs and values and provide a wide range of sources and cultural options individuals can use to forge their identities and shape their values and views of the world. Consumers and makers of visual images, especially children, tend to construct and perform identities and self-concepts, try out new roles and create self-images within and in collaboration with members of the socio-cultural groups to which they belong (Schroeder & Borgerson, 2002). Their self-images and self-concepts are confirmed by family, peers, and friends as well as by the prototypes provided by visual culture.

Visual images, especially from mass and electronic media, are tied to specific ideologies and represent specific cultural assumptions about beauty, desire, glamour, violence, social values, and the norms of the culture that produced them (Sturken & Cartwright, 2001). As products of the capitalist cultural industry, they play a central role in the commerce of most contemporary societies, in shaping the tastes of the masses and moulding people's desire to satisfy false or true needs (Dorn, 2003). As Sturken & Cartwright (2001) and Barnard (1995) point out, visual images are one of the primary means through which exchange of goods is promoted. They are also the means through which the idea of consumption and use of commodities as an aspect of self is encouraged. The overproduction of goods that is a characteristic of capitalist societies is linked to overproduction of images, mainly for advertising purposes. That is why the production and circulation of ideas, values and viewpoints through the spectacle of visual culture has raised debates about the effects of imagery in shaping consumer culture, development of a global financial market, and

ownership of mass media and control of masses (Sturken & Cartwright, 2001; Garoian & Gaudelius, 2004; Tavin & Hausman, 2004).

Visual images can affect people's identities in the sense that they provide models through which they can come to understand themselves and others. The linguistic codes, cultural signs, values and representations they carry all help individuals to observe and appropriate social constructions like masculinity and femininity, make distinctions between gender and sex, distinguish between the social roles of girls and boys, and accept stereotypes about otherness (Tavin & Anderson, 2003; Wagner-Ott, 2002). As such, individuals, especially children, learn, act, interact, react, and construct specific concepts about the world and themselves through their visual experiences. On the other hand, the way they are influenced by visual culture to construct their identities is affected by issues of difference, such as their socio-cultural background and religion as these affect their practices of looking, interpretations of visual images, and appropriation of the values, roles, and norms they represent.

Moreover, according to Vigorito & Curry (1998), individuals use visual images as information resources and as a tactic in order to maintain and validate their existing identities and concepts about the world and others. The fact that visual culture informs, represents, and communicates behavioural patterns, norms and roles may influence individuals to accept ideas about violence, racism, and beauty and/or may help them choose a life style that is acceptable to the socio-cultural group to which they belong. According to Bram (2003), people live in a world they do not completely understand, and in order to make sense of it they exploit visual culture to mediate between them and it. So, visual culture is a lens through which individuals see, and a medium through which they interpret what they see (Leppert, 1997). This implies that people acquire and construct knowledge about the socio-cultural group to which they belong, the world and other cultures through visual culture, and that it enables them to compare, contrast, negotiate and appropriate cultural values, codes and norms, and construct and reconstruct their identities.

1.2.4 Visual Culture, Identity Construction and Art Education

Many art educators acknowledge that studying the role of visual culture in identity construction is important because it is a source for obtaining information about children's beliefs, values and multiple ways of understanding themselves and the world. They believe that it is important to enable children to recognise and understand their own cultural values and assumptions and guide them to interrogate and explore ways they form their self-concepts. So, they research the effects of visual images from popular and mass media culture on them. Wagner-Ott (2002), for example, researched effects of comics, animated cartoons, and toys on children's understanding of construction of verbal behaviour. Similarly, Panaekas (1998) investigated children's attitudes towards comic books. Bolin (1992) researched the role of material culture in children's formation of gender identity, whereas Wilson (1999) and Wilson & Toku (2004) investigated 'manga' influences and representations of identity in children's drawings. Stokrocki (2001, 2002) researched adolescents' and pre-adolescents' perceptions of shopping malls.

When Wilson (1999) and Toku (2004) studied the influence of 'manga' comics and cartoons on Japanese students' drawings, they found that they provide them with prototypes through which they understood themselves and society. Wilson (1999) claims that 'manga' models provide Japanese children with opportunities for acting out social roles shape their conceptions of national identity and points out that their drawings often resemble 'manga' comic characters. Wilson's research confirms the power of visual culture to affect children's construction of identity and their artistic production. His findings revealed that Japanese children appropriated certain kinds of concepts about reality, the world and the others embodied in 'manga'. For example, their reproductions of 'manga' characters with round-shaped eyes and blond hair indicated that they adopted adult's fascination for Western models of beauty.

Researches like Wilson's and Toku's collect data about children's (i) interests in and preferences for visual culture genres; (ii) interpretations of and responses to messages images convey; and (iii) appropriation of role models provided by visual culture. This kind of information can inform art teachers' curricula and help to make them more relevant to

children's everyday lives. Freedman & Wood (1999), Freedman (2003b), and Wagner-Ott (2002) argued that getting children to interpret visual images from mass and popular culture can help them begin to understand their influential role in shaping their own and other people's identities. Moreover, it may enable them to understand how they appropriate the behavioural models and social knowledge provided by visual imagery.

1.3 VISUAL CULTURE EDUCATION

Many postmodern scholars understand art as a contextual and culturally specific phenomenon and seek to connect it with life. They decentre notions of the individual and creativity, emphasise the interaction between art, language, culture and society, and promote pluralism and diversity (Milbrandt, 1998; Emery, 2002). North American and Australian art educators, who write from a postmodern perspective, such as Efland *et al* (1996), Hamblen (1999), Duncum (2001a, 2002a), and Freedman (2003a, 2003b), have rejected modernist concepts of art education, in which, as they claim, the development of creativity and individual self-expression were afforded priority in student learning. They believe that the essential function of art education is analysis and interpretation of meanings visual images and artefacts convey (Aguirre, 2004). This implies that in art lessons students should be involved in a search for meaning in visual images and artefacts. However, there is a risk the recreational and therapeutic nature of art to be undermined as the critical, historical, and cultural aspects of learning are overemphasised when teachers focus on art history, art criticism and aesthetics.

Moreover, the same postmodern art educators argue that public education both in Europe and post colonial countries is based on notions of 'high culture', a term that refers to both arts and sciences fostered by European Renaissance and the cultural milieu and consumption of a West European upper class (Milbrandt, 1998; Emery, 2002; Miles, 1999). Therefore, they question any distinction between 'high', 'popular' and 'ethnic' arts, and argue that anything visual ought to be valued equally and considered a work of art (Macdonald, 1998; Emery, 2002; Efland *et al*, 1996). They refer to cultural theorists, such as Kellner (1995), Mirzoeff (1998), Mitchell (1994), and Rogoff (1998), who describe a new 'social order' in which vision is privileged as the dominant aesthetic principle because it is understood that

visual representations help people regulate social relationships and construct their identities (Keifer-Boyd *et al*, 2003; Tavin 2000).

At the time the research began, some North American, Australian, and European art educators were attempting to redefine the goals and content of art education and rename it ‘visual culture education’ because they believed the term ‘visual culture’ best describes the visual environment in which students live. They wanted to re-orientate ‘art education’ in order to help them understand the social and cultural worlds they inhabit and how they construct their identities (Duncum, 2001a, 2002b, 2003b; Tavin & Hausman, 2002; Aguirre, 2004; Freedman, 2003b). Because images have become the primary form of signification in post-industrial societies, they argued that students should examine selected genres of visual culture of particular significance in their lives. They suggested this could be also achieved by expanding the content of art education to include material, popular and mass-media culture and focusing on themes such as class, gender, race, and sexuality. However, this raises questions about: (i) whether acknowledging that people live in a world saturated by visual images means that art education should be changed or renamed to visual culture education; (ii) if it is necessary to educate children about anything and everything visual and visible they encounter in their ordinary life; and (iii) whether visual culture education can solve exigencies of classroom practice like students’ assessment or generalist primary teachers’ unwillingness to teach art.

1.3.1 Origins, Rationale, Aims and Content

Chalmers (2005) and Duncum (1997a) consider that the idea of visual culture education dates back to the 1960s, 70s and 80s, while Tavin (2005) claims it can be traced back 200 years in writings inside and outside art education. Indeed art educators had stressed the pervasiveness of visual imagery and the need for a more inclusive view of the visual arts. In North America McFee (1966, cited in Chalmers, 2005), Nadaner (1981, 1985), Lanier (1966), Chapman (1978), and Kurtz (1974) encouraged art teachers to include architecture, television imagery, films, billboards, clothing, posters, and shop windows displays in their art lessons. Their main rationale was that this could help students realise the values projected by popular visual imagery and how they constructed their views of the world. Similarly, Freedman (2003b), and Duncum’s (2002b) rationale for changing the title and content of art

education to ‘visual culture education is that engaging students with the study of visual images from everyday life will extend their critical understanding about the meanings they convey and role they play in the construction of identity. This implies that students should be given opportunities to relate their life experiences of and interests in visual culture to school learning in order to expand their understanding about the relationship of visual culture to the construction of their own identities (Boughton *et al*, 2002).

Visual images, material artefacts, time based-media, and performances understood as expressions of people’s ideas, beliefs, and attitudes, shape the identities of individuals and groups because they embody values and beliefs and reflect a groups’ culture at specific points of time (Rogoff, 1998). According to Heise (2004), students’ interpretations of them can be viewed as reflective self-examinations of their own attitudes, values and beliefs that could help them rediscover themselves, understand the world and become more critical and discriminate consumers, and informed participants in society. Postmodern ideas about identity construction are significant in visual culture education. By learning how to interpret visual images students may learn how to decode culturally learned norms and values they take for granted. They may also learn how to reflect on the social roles images promote, ways they enact them in their own lives, and they use them to construct or re-construct their own identities (Pauly, 2001).

But what do North American educators really mean by ‘visual culture’ and ‘studying visual images from everyday life’? Although they claim visual culture includes all the material crafts, buildings, images, time-based media and performances (Walker & Chaplin, 1997, p.2), the review of recent literature on the topic revealed that the content of visual culture education was restricted to images from TV programmes, films, commercials, theme parks, displays in shopping malls, the Internet, and video games and it excluded fine arts. It is possible they concentrate in popular and mass-media culture examples because these saturate contemporary societies or because they want to stress the powerful effect of these particular genres on the process of identity construction and children’s socialisation (Dorn, 2001, 2003). Finally, it seems they favour that mass-media and popular culture visual images over fine art, design or architecture images and artefacts for ideological reasons i.e. because they enable exploration of issues like power and capitalism. According to Freedman

& Schuler (2002) and Efland (2004), the study of mass-produced, mass-distributed and mass-consumed visual images is important because it can develop children's critical awareness about how the culture industry produces knowledge about the world and help them make choices about which influences to accept. Most proponents of visual culture in N. America adopt a social reconstructionist approach that emphasises exploring social issues like gender, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomics, political conditions, communities, the natural, human-made and virtual environments in art lessons with a view to changing society (Freedman, 2000; Hicks, 1994; Albers, 1999; Stuhr, 1994; Wagner-Ott, 2002).

A few art educators in North America like Burkhart (2006), Kader (2003), Marschalek (2005), and Blandy & Bolin (2003), adopt what is called a material culture orientation for art curriculum. They stress the significance of past and present human-designed objects in peoples' everyday life because they carry and maintain ideas about certain cultures, communities, religions or nations. According to Blandy & Bolin (2003), the main rationale for teaching about material culture is that it can promote critical understanding of objects and environments and their effects on people's everyday life. Burkhart (2006) suggests that students use their prior experience and knowledge to analyse specific characteristics and sensory properties of selected objects; contextualise them by exploring cultural and social issues related to their production, circulation and exchange, investigate their utilitarian and symbolic functions, and inquire into their cultural impact. Although material culture advocates argue that this is a broader concept than visual culture education they also restrict fine art and focus on everyday life objects and forms, like cars, bicycles, bedroom design, etc. Duncum's (2000, p.31) view of visual culture education seems to synthesise both visual and material culture orientation to curriculum. He argues that students should study not only visual images and the context of viewing but also artefacts and sites that contribute to shaping people's beliefs, attitudes and values. Although this orientation is more inclusive, it could leave teachers to decide about the content of their curricula. This implies that teachers need to develop their own criteria for choosing curriculum content and resources.

1.3.2 International Perspectives

The aims and content of visual culture curricula proposed by American art educators might not be as relevant to children's experiences elsewhere. However, the literature review showed that that European, Asian, Australian and South American art educators, writing in art educational journals and presenting papers in international conferences, share similar concerns and were trying to incorporate imagery from popular and mass media culture to their art lessons. For example, the Danish art educators Illeris, Buhl, and Flensburg (2005) argued that visual culture education facilitates different ways of investigating students' visual experiences and their interactions with visual imagery. Buhl (2005), for example, acknowledges that the concept of visual culture is a response to social changes and technological developments and that art and generalist teachers should incorporate 'visual phenomena' from children's everyday lives, such as ways they dress and behave in their lessons. She has proposed a conceptual framework for teaching visual culture that focuses on individuals' viewing practices and argues that the aim of visual culture education is to explore what kinds of visual images and artefacts children view and how. They should understand how they select the images they view in physical or virtual spaces, be able to reflect on their choices, and communicate their views.

In the UK, art educators like Swift and Steers (2006) argue that a balanced curriculum should include a variety of cultural forms and a range of media so that learners understand art's importance in and relevance to people's lives. 'Design education' is a dimension of the British curriculum that has been long established and is understood as 'a critical area of experience and learning' (Green & Steers, 2006). The English curriculum tries to integrate forms of design like architecture, photography, interior design, etc into art lessons in order to give students opportunities not only to explore a variety of materials and techniques but also to develop expertise in them that would enable them become practicing designers in the future. Moreover, British art educators like (Stanley, 2002; 2005) seem to pay attention to the importance of design and function of cultural sites such as theme parks in ways learners construe meaning from them.

For the Hungarian artist and art educator Bodóczy (2003) visual culture is a means for facilitating deeper understanding of the functions of the culture of spectacle, and ways visual information from a variety of sources, such as television and the Internet, as well as contemporary art, contribute to an individual's identity formation. He also acknowledges that children acquire a significant portion of knowledge outside school especially from mass-media and argues that schools should teach them how to analyse and select this visual information. For Bodóczy, therefore, informal learning and the lived-in environment are the two main sources that ought to determine the content of art education. Similarly, some Turkish art educators understand visual culture education as a means for developing critical visual literacy (Soganci, 2005) and expanding children's understanding of the visual environment they inhabit (Turkkan, 2006). Belet (2006), on the other hand, argues that visual culture education is an interdisciplinary field that focuses on enabling children to study local and global visual imagery.

The Spanish art educators Vidiella & Hernandez (2006, p.106) understand visual culture as a 'strategic approach' for interpreting visual images and cultural representations. Similarly, Aguirre (2004) views art education as the study of visual culture products which should be examined as cultural works and as agents of aesthetic experience. He understands aesthetic experience as a pleasant, sensuous experience that generates emotional response to images and objects. Aguirre argues that any cultural image or artefact from high or popular art that generates aesthetic experience should be included in the art curriculum. However, because aesthetic experiences are subjective, singular and cannot be repeated (De Bolla, 2001), teachers need to consider which of kinds of resources and why should be included in their art curricula.

Other Spanish art educators, such as Corredera (2004) and Pagés (2004) have probably been influenced by the American notion of 'visual culture education'. They argue that because visual images from mass-media constitute information sources and meaning constructors children should explore the ways they appropriate them in art lessons. Pagés (2004) understands mass-produced images and artefacts as 'pedagogical places' that provide children with opportunities to examine ways they form their own identities. The review

traced American influences in the writing of Chinese art educator Hu (2006), and Brazilians Egas (2006) and Martins (2006). These authors acknowledged the predominance of visual imagery in contemporary society and its influence on viewers and claimed that teaching about visual culture establishes connections with pupils' realities (Egas, 2006) and helps them learn how to judge and appreciate familiar imagery (Hu, 2006).

In conclusion, visual culture appears to be a global trend in art education theorising. For art educators around the world teaching about visual culture genres is important because it gives students opportunities to analyse and reflect on their own visual experiences and understand ways they contribute to formation of self-concepts. Teaching about visual culture can also enrich students' knowledge about the creation of images, artefacts and cultural sites, develop their critical thinking, change their viewing habits and enable them apply what is learned in school to everyday life. Acknowledging the importance of popular visual imagery in students' lives implies, therefore, that the content of the art curriculum should expand and include genres like television, shadow theatre, advertisements, magazines, etc.

1.3.3 Objections

Several objections were found in the literature to the notion of visual culture education. Eisner (2001), Kamhi (2003), Stinespring (2001), and Bauerlein (2004), object to the fact that the content of visual culture education is primarily political. This implies that art and generalist teachers have to act like social studies teachers. To be able to interpret the products of visual culture teachers need to have knowledge not only of art history, aesthetics and art criticism, but also of media technology, economics, sociology, Marxist and postmodern theories, and politics. This implies that their initial studies should include relevant training (Eisner, 2001). They also need to develop the skills required for leading interpretation of visual imagery and engaging their students in meaningful investigations (Herman, 2005).

Studying visual culture also necessitates teachers adopting a critical stance on society and discussing power relationships that are unequal or unfair with students. As Dorn (2005) points out, this raises the questions of how much teachers' own social biases should be

injected into classroom discussion. Their social, economic, and political orientations are likely to inform discussions about dominant values and norms conveyed by visual images from mass media and popular culture. Stinespring (2001) argues that it is also possible teachers to guide their students towards a 'correct' interpretation, and indoctrinate them how to think in order to find out the 'true' meaning of a visual image. According to Bauerlein (2004), Smith (2003), and Kamhi (2003) this happens because the critique in visual culture education tends to flow in one direction: against capitalism, consumer culture and conservatism. In my experience, teachers may consciously or unconsciously inject their standpoints into classroom and indoctrinate students towards what they believe it is right or wrong in all school subjects. One of the purposes of studying mass media and popular culture visual images in art lessons is to enable students develop their critical thinking. Having this in mind and reflecting on their teaching practices teachers may avoid indoctrination by encouraging them to share their views and be critical.

In visual culture education students are asked to study, analyse and criticise the sociological, historical, cultural and economic factors that influence production of visual images and objects as well as the formation of their own identities and views of the world (Eisner, 2001; Bauerlein, 2004; Smith, 2003). According to visual culture proponents, this can result in their becoming critical consumers of visual culture and more informed citizens. However, Bauerlein (2004, p.11) doubts if visual culture education 'can send children back home with sharper interpretive senses'. His argument is based on the limited time allocated to art education in schools and the fact that children are so enthusiastic about visual images of popular culture that they consume them unconsciously. Despite their art teachers' efforts to engage them in critical analysis of mass-produced images, he thinks they will still consume and be influenced by them unconsciously no matter what they are taught. He argues that students are more likely to acquire critical thought and attitude towards popular and mass media culture if they are engaged in analysis of more sophisticated, layered, artistic examples of films like Tornatore's *Cinema Nuovo Paradiso*, or Bergam's *Wild Strawberries*, and artworks such as Bernini's *Apollo and Daphne* (ibid, p.11). They should have opportunities to encounter artworks they are unlikely to find on their own so they can recognise and experience them on their lives.

Kamhi (2003, 2004) and Dorn (2001) are also concerned about overexposure to mass-oriented objects and images inside education. They argue that merging fine art with popular and mass-media culture can produce a sense in young learners that nothing is unique and special. According to Kamhi (2003), Dorn (2001) and Richardson (2004) because the distinction between objects of refined taste and ordinary life worlds is minimised teaching about visual culture cultivates and encourages poor taste. Moreover, Smith (2003) and Kamhi (2004) claim that aesthetics is irrelevant in visual culture education since developing critical understanding is its main objective. This implies that all products of visual culture, including fine arts, need to be viewed only as products that represent power relationships. Although fine arts were valued for their transcendence that transforms the everyday world, it is not enough students to explore them for their aesthetic features and qualities alone but they should examine them for the meanings they convey (Efland 2005). This may enable them to understand the societal, cultural, historical, political or economic conditions that influenced their production.

Kamhi (2003, 2004) and Smith (2003) also fear that sensitivity, imagination and emotion are diminished when questions about social political economical and historical contexts of visual images and artefacts are given more importance than the study of the aesthetic, expressive, or therapeutic roles of art. They argue that art education is a vehicle for expressing emotions and is a field of play. It can contribute, therefore, to children's, personal fulfilment, mental health, development of imagination, and social interaction (Lowenfeld, 1947; Gadamer, 1995). Because it is probably one of the subjects of the curriculum where freedom to explore ideas is permitted, it provides an antidote to the ill effects of other subjects (Smith, 2003; Siegesmund, 1998). However, in my view, all these objections of visual culture education are to be of lesser importance than its benefits. Responding to students' needs, linking schooling to their life worlds and enabling them become critical citizens and consumers through reflective interactions with visual images is among the main advantages of visual culture education.

Given these objections towards visual culture education teachers now face a dilemma about what to include in their art lessons. Teaching about popular and mass media imagery is

socially relevant to the real needs of students and may transform them into analytic and critical spectators. However, neglecting fine arts and aesthetics may minimise opportunities students have to appreciate the distinctive nature and value of fine art and evaluate their aesthetic merit (Stinespring, 2001; Kamhi, 2003; Dorn, 2003). So, trying to find a balance and including both popular and mass media imagery and fine arts may be a solution for developing a curriculum for Greek art education.

1.3.4 Problems in Designing and Implementing Visual Culture Curricula

The literature review revealed that American, Asian and European art educators all stressed the proliferation and pervasiveness of visual images and objects and their importance in people's lives. Although their aims for teaching about visual culture varied, visual culture education advocates, especially from North America, tended to limit the content of their art lessons to one genre of visual culture, or select typical or representative examples, mostly from popular and mass media culture, for study. This conflicts with the real life situation in art education in most other countries, where it is oriented mainly towards Western fine arts. Stankiewicz (2004) and Richardson (2004) argue that the trend of visual culture education has a minor impact on day-to-day art practice in American schools. This probably happened because at the time of writing the thesis there were so many diverse but overlapping definitions of the term 'visual culture' and a wide range of rationales had been suggested for including it into art curriculum with different aims. According to Stankiewicz (*ibid*), advocates of visual culture must clarify and explain its importance better and try to frame it within national state art curricula.

Efland (2005) points out one more problem: the difficulty of deciding how many visual culture genres should be included. Proponents of visual culture education have suggested that displays in shopping malls, tourist souvenirs, theme parks, TV programmes, advertisements, comics and films, computer games, children's toys, community celebrations and rituals all provide curriculum content. As visual culture consists of all two- and three-dimension visible objects produced and consumed by people, this makes it difficult for teachers to select their curriculum content and resources. According to Efland (2005), the huge number of visual culture genres confounds the selection process. The fact that there is

no pre-established hierarchy to distinguish privileged visual images or objects, as is the case with fine art, leaves teachers confused to decide. For Efland (ibid) the problem comes when the collective judgement and aesthetic values of the cultural group to which a teacher belongs interfere with his/her choices. Kamhi (2003), Stinespring (2001), and Richardson (2004), view the absence of a hierarchy as problematic in the sense that it eliminates the distinction between the 'exceptional' and 'commonplace'. They stress that the acceptance of all the forms of visual culture as equal and rejection of standards and quality judgements makes it difficult for teachers to develop a curriculum that enable students acquire skills in reasoned perception.

Moreover, Herman (2005) has identified limitations that occur in lessons plans and activities proposed by art educators that originate in visual culture education theory. She complains that: (i) they consist of step-by-step guides that lead to predetermined projects that have little relevance to students' lives or contemporary art practice; (ii) the learning activities are too teacher-directed, give specific instructions to children and dictate them how they should react to and read the images; and (iii) art-making activities tend to be problematic since students are not freely responding to images they previously interpreted. According to Eisner (2001), creating artworks requires students to make choices, learn how to use the different media, make judgements, and find alternative solutions to better express their thoughts and feelings. This does not seem to happen in visual culture education as in most of the proposed lesson plans reviewed at the time the research began children are not asked to learn technical, material and compositional skills.

1.4 DEVELOPING VISUAL CULTURE CURRICULA

According to Stenhouse (1975), Cornbleth (1990) and Grundy (1987) developing curricula is a complex activity. It requires a body of knowledge to be transferred, identification of concepts that would permeate it and development of a written statement, which should represent expectations and outlines goals. It also involves mediation of cultural knowledge, and communication of ideas through interaction and choice of teaching strategy and planning for activities and resources. Since the aim of this study was to introduce visual culture education in Greece, it was necessary to identify what the main concepts that

permeate a visual culture curriculum were and some relevant teaching strategies and resources.

1.4.1 Key Concepts

One stated aim of visual culture education is to enhance student learning through their energetic engagement in meaningful classroom activities. Involving students in their own learning requires clear curriculum objectives and content that is relevant to their life experiences, needs and interests. Making learning relevant to students' life experiences is a key concept that permeates visual culture curricula. This idea is considered important in learning theory generally as well as by art educators (Freedman, 2003a; Stuhr, 2003; Rogers, 1969; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogers & Freiberg 1994). Validating the student voice is a central notion in visual culture education. Their expressed interests and needs, previously identified by teachers, should encompass the content and structure of an art curriculum. According to Carpenter (2003), making the content of art lessons meaningful to students' lives implies that teachers begin with examples of visual culture that relate to their world realities and with which they are familiar.

Toku (2001), for example, proposes that familiar sites and imagery, such as shopping malls and TV programmes, both attract children's interest and motivation to make/create art and discover themselves, and offer them opportunities to reflect on everyday aesthetic experiences. These experiences have significant value in children's lives in that they help them to structure their thoughts, feelings and actions about themselves and the world around them (Duncum, 1999; Heise, 2004). 'Everyday aesthetic experience' is, thus, the second important key concept of visual culture education. Duncum (ibid) and Hu (2006), claim that children learn much, though not everything, from what they see. They stress the benefits of everyday aesthetic experience over those of 'high' art as displayed in museums in forming and informing children's identity and views of the world. This happens because mainstream sites of everyday culture, such as television, design in public spaces, and the Internet, have a ubiquitous presence in people's lives and offer pleasurable, rich resources for identity construction. Whereas these kinds of sites display numerous cultural codes, values and norms in pleasant and enjoyable ways, they provide people with sensory overload of

experience and emotions. This can result in deflecting attention away from the functions of mass-produced visual images as a form of propaganda in the service of cultural imperialism and consumerism (Garoian & Gaudelius, 2004). This might become a weakness of visual culture education unless a teacher encourages students to reflect on their aesthetic experiences and explore how and why looking at mass media and popular culture images provokes sensations, feelings and thoughts.

Although these aesthetic experiences are ephemeral, superficial or self-referential, they probably have an impact on identity construction because they are connected with representations of ethnicity, race, nationality, and sexuality. Children's visual and aesthetic experiences should be included in art curricula so they learn how visual culture influence people's views, concepts, and identities (Tavin, 2002; Barnard, 1995; Vryzas, 1997). However, scholars, such as Bauerlein (2004), fear that focusing only on children's experiences of mass-media and popular culture, may result in them simply soaking up the popular, material and mass-media culture images included in lessons in the same way as outside class. Because material objects and mass-media images may not be formally, conceptually, or, historically as rich as works of 'high' art, developing children's aesthetic taste might be neglected especially if there is no examination of tradition, and works of fine art are totally excluded from the curriculum (Richardson, 2004; Bauerlein, 2004).

The third key concept that permeates visual culture education is 'critical pedagogy' understood as a form of critical reflection on visual culture that leads to critical consciousness (Tavin, 2003; Heise, 2004). Critical pedagogy implies questioning and challenging dominant cultural beliefs and values as well as examining the nature of culture and society. According to Tavin, (2003), Park (2006), and Heise (2004), visual culture education practice that is informed by critical pedagogy gives children opportunities to acquire critical consciousness through analysis and interpretation of visual images and examination of ways they construct meanings about themselves and the world. Through paying attention, for example, to the practices of seeing visual images and artefacts, children can better understand how images teach them to see and think, how they make meaning

from them, and how they affect speech patterns, clothing styles, behaviours, and help them shape their identities (Wanger-Ott, 2002; Garoian & Gaudelius, 2004).

The major advantage of critical pedagogy is that students not only acquire critical thinking skills and dispositions but also critical consciousness, which is understood to reform habits of thought (Burbules & Berk, 1999). However, one of my major concerns at this stage of the research was whether primary school teachers in Greece would feel comfortable getting students to criticise social relations, institutions and traditions that contribute to the production of visual culture and maintenance of cultural values, beliefs, norms, and models. Greek teachers are agents of an educational policy that tends to promote memorisation rather than critical thinking and does not give much space for questioning and problematising (Koulouri & Ventouras, 1994; Katsikas, 2005). Many of them have limited experience of questioning cultural assumptions and challenging political and social issues such as class, race, difference and ideology. They may be sceptical or even reluctant to embrace critical pedagogy because it departs from what they remember from their own schooling, or initial training.

Finally, the fourth and last key concept that permeates visual culture education is ‘interdisciplinarity’. According to Efland *et al* (1996) and Freedman (2003c), visual culture curricula should include content that integrates knowledge from several school subjects. This gives children opportunities to understand how different kinds of knowledge interconnect and can be applied in situations inside and outside school. It also gives teachers opportunities to organise their lessons around important themes or big ideas, such as identity, fantasy and reality, nature and culture, and integrate concepts of different disciplines (Ulbricht, 1998; Walker, 2001). For example, in order to explore the big theme of identity other concepts such as ‘status’, ‘assimilation’, ‘stereotypes’, ‘change’ and ‘insecurity’, ‘models’ and ‘mimicry’, have to be introduced. This can happen through correlating art with other school subjects, and incorporate knowledge from other disciplines, such as history and sociology.

On the other hand, because visual images and artefacts should be examined in the socio-cultural context in which they are produced, themes like power, ideologies, and use of mass media and electronic technologies should be also investigated. This implies that teaching visual culture requires interdisciplinary instruction. For example, in critically examining advertisements about children's toys, such as dolls and action figures, with them teachers need to inquire into how producers and advertisers relate products to gender identity and how boys and girls appropriate a range of meanings and usages (Wagner-Ott, 2002). This may help them better introduce the topic in class and address themes about consumerism and gender identity. Then these themes can be explored using children's personal experiences as well as knowledge from other school subjects like social studies, and psychology.

It is clear that designing and implementing an interdisciplinary curriculum is demanding (Ulbricht 1998; Hinde 2005; Panaritis 1995). Before they have to design units of study that are relevant to a particular age group of learners, teachers have to identify their interests, needs, and real-life concerns (Vars, 1991; Beane, 1995). Because the learning activities have to be developmentally appropriate, teachers need to know whether their students are capable of understanding selected themes and topics (Hinde, 2005). Exploring a big theme like identity, for example, may be too complicated or sophisticated for six or seven-years-old children unless teachers plan the appropriate modes of instruction and activities. They also need to think about what they have already learned in different school subjects and how they can help them recall this previous knowledge. Finally, as Brophy & Alleman (1991) point out, when an interdisciplinary curriculum is well-designed, the activities are educationally significant and foster accomplishment of major goals in every subject area.

At the end of the review, I concluded that a visual culture curriculum should offer learners artistic, socio-political, historical, and cultural knowledge as well as opportunities for critically examining their aesthetic experiences. Moreover, in developing visual culture curriculum it is necessary select relevant content and teaching and learning strategies that will deliver the curriculum aims and objectives at first, and facilitate student learning. So, the next section of this chapter discusses a summary of teaching and learning strategies that were identified in the literature that had been developed and tested out by art educators.

1.4.2 Teaching and Learning Strategies

The review of literature identified at least ten types of strategies for teaching visual culture education. All of them sought to enhance children's critical understanding about the meanings visual culture conveys and the role visual images play in the construction of self-understanding and understanding of others. Because these were so many, I analysed their common characteristics and summarised them into three main types as follows: (i) art-making as a socio-cultural critique, (ii) focused interaction and communication, and (iii) object-based learning. These will now be examined one by one and their strengths and weaknesses will be explored.

Art-making as sociocultural critique: According to Duncum (2002a, p.6), combining analysis of visual images and artefacts with art-making is one way of exploring meaning. Because visual culture itself is a meaning-making process, which is closely connected with individuals' understanding of themselves and the world, this has particular significance. The combination encourages children to express and explore their needs, interests, thoughts and feelings, and negotiate and renegotiate the meanings visual images convey, the cultural values and beliefs of the socio-cultural group in which they belong and ways these influence their identities. According to Tavin & Anderson (2003) and Freedman (2003a), this strategy can transform children's beliefs and enables them to become more critical of the values and models they appropriate from visual culture. It may also help them understand the practice of art and how artists think, make decisions and define themselves through their work. Classroom discussions about the role visual imagery plays in society and identity construction, ways audiences perceive and appropriate visual images and the nature of representation may inform art making (Duncum, 2002a, p.7). However, it was not clear to me in this approach if technical competence is valued. If it is not I agree with Walling (2000) and Gentle (1993) that students will not gain experience in how to use materials, techniques and processes, which has always been one of art education main aims.

Tavin & Anderson (2003) tried to develop fifth grade children's critical thinking about popular visual culture through decoding 'Disney' films and cartoons. The children were asked to discuss and interpret Disney representations of gender, race and ethnicity and ways

these affected their understanding of themselves and others. The art educators provided the necessary background information about Disney films and cartoons. Throughout this project the children discussed stereotypes on selected films and cartoons and Disney's representation of American history and ways these affected their views about others. They were also asked to comment on and criticise Disney films and cartoons through production of their own artworks. The children created movie-posters to illustrate a re-visioned Disney movie and used collage and assemblage techniques to create an artwork that commented on a chosen theme. In their concluding remarks, Tavin & Anderson (ibid) claim that these lessons were enjoyable and the students gained awareness of how visual representations promote race, gender and violence. However, it is not clear to me whether the children learned how to apply techniques and media, or how they evaluated their own artworks and those of others (Walling, 2000). This article in *Art Education* journal did not provide any much practical information about the length and the kind of instructions the children were given to help them interpret Disney films and cartoons, or the extent to which this influenced their interpretations and reflections on their own experience and viewing practice.

From analysis of this strategy I reasoned that if Greek teachers were to adopt this strategy, they would ask their students to look at a particular visual image from their everyday environment, consider the context in which it was produced, discuss its aesthetic values (e.g. its form and function, identify similar visual images or artworks), trace the cultural values, stereotypes it carries and finally produce their own artefacts. The children would be asked to think, imagine, visualise and act through art-making on this learning. They also would be asked to respond to and reflect on their visual and aesthetic experiences in the hope this would result in acquiring an understanding of how imagery affects their own self-concepts as they appropriate specific characteristics of visual representations (Freedman, 2003a). In summary, teachers would (i) provide students with opportunities to make connections between the visual image they experienced and its influence on own lives, and (ii) encourage them to interpret products of visual culture and reflect on their own cultural values, attitudes and beliefs through art-making in order to understand themselves and their own worlds.

Focused interaction and communication: If Greek teachers applied this kind of strategy, they would ask children to reflect on the ways they created representations, perceived symbols in

visual images and attributed meanings in them through critical interpretation. According to Barret (2002), interpreting an image or artefact involves talking about thoughts, feelings, and previous experience and knowledge for the purposes of constructing meaning. Although the particular strategy necessitates personal/individual and communal/shared interpretation, it focuses mainly on the latter. Group sharing helps individuals to synthesise insights and observations (Barret, *ibid*). So, what I understood as focused interaction and communication strategy was that it is an exchange of ideas between children. The literature suggests that this motivates them to learn more, gives them opportunities to apply the knowledge gained through sharing ideas and feelings, and develops their critical thinking skills (Pitri, 2004; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Brown *et al*, 1989). In this strategy, the members of a particular classroom community would also be involved in choosing the topics to be discussed and take responsibility for their own learning. Whereas this strategy offers potential for developing children's thinking skills and abilities to communicate, the art-making seems to play a subservient role to the meaning-making process in general.

If Greek teachers were to adopt this strategy they would have to abandon the role of content expert and instructor and concentrate in carefully formulating questions for open discussion. They would have to start lessons with looking at images and asking questions, such as 'what do you see or, 'what does it mean?', (Barret, *ibid*) so as to give children opportunities to describe and interpret a given visual image. In order to reinforce children's participation in discussion teachers would also need to act as participant-observers respond to their interpretations and pose guiding questions e.g. about artist's/maker's intentions, or the purpose of a production. Because this strategy emphasises communication and interaction between individual children, construction of knowledge is an active process (Quay, 2003).

Although her strategy had a different name, Stokrocki (2002) engaged secondary school students aged 16-19 in examination of consumer culture and design by studying shopping malls. The lesson plan and the questions she asked them were informed by the results of research she had conducted previously into preadolescent and adolescent students' perspectives of shopping malls (Stokrocki, 2001). She asked them to discuss how shop-window displays attract people's attention, how ordinary goods are displayed and how the

visual displays in malls can affect people's moods. In her art lessons, in which they interpreted the interior design of shopping malls, students were asked to identify shopping preferences and consumer choices, shopping trends, product qualities with the aim to understand the evolution of shopping trends, and interpret their own consumer identities (ibid, 2002). The students were also engaged in practical activities, such as planning and implementing an advertising campaign.

According to Stokrocki (2001), conducting class discussion about products of visual culture is difficult because: (i) some children are ambivalent about discussions and want to make things in art lessons; (ii) their reasoning may be based on family or peer influence and not reflect on their own experience; or (iii) they may have difficulty understanding how social and political factors are embedded in the objects and visual images they consume in everyday life. Given that this is the case with adolescent students it is likely to be much more difficult using this strategy with primary age students as it requires developed cognitive skills such as visual processing, analytical thinking, posing questions, testing hypotheses, verbal reasoning (Perkins, 1994).

Object-based learning: This strategy is based on the idea that children can learn from an art object or visual image by exploring its aesthetic qualities, the ideas it conveys and the context in which it has been produced (Gaither, 1991; Dow, 1993). 'Object-based learning' is frequently used in museums. In visual culture education common visual images and objects from children's daily environments can be examined in art lessons. According to Marshall (2002) and Burkhart (2006), this gives children opportunities to think about and reflect on their own knowledge, experiences and attitudes since common objects and visual images represent cultural values, beliefs, or practices and are connected to memories and personal stories. This strategy also gives children skills in 'reading' objects and visual images and develops an understanding of how to analyse them and record their views.

Educational activities based on object-based learning take a variety of forms and may include: observation, thinking and asking questions about an object/image in order to discover its meaning, searching for other artefacts that are similar in form or concept, producing artworks inspired by the object/image or the ideas it conveys, and discussing the

process of art-making and criticising and reflecting upon their own products (Marshall, 2002). When they study a particular object or visual image it is the children who ask questions about it, such as ‘how was it made and by whom?’, ‘why was it created?’ and ‘what story is the object telling?’ (Stott, 1987). This implies that they have previously been instructed what kind of questions to pose or how and where to search for information about the object they study. The information they gain this way combined with their previous experiences and knowledge is supposed to help them generate their own meanings about it. The object or visual image serves as a jumping off point for: (i) exploring the cultural, social and political context that influenced its production; and (ii) posing questions about its significance and role in the particular socio-cultural environment the children inhabit (Burkhart, 2006). According to Stott (1987), Gaither (1991) and Dow (1993), teachers’ have to guide and support children’s investigations into the meanings the object conveys, help them build on previous knowledge, answer their questions and facilitate classroom discussion.

Each of the abovementioned strategies incorporates what is known as active, cooperative learning since learners are involved in answering and posing questions, discussion, debating, interpreting visual imagery during class, working in teams on projects and interacting closely with peers (Matsagouras, 1998; Sapon-Shevin, 1994; Vosniadou, 2001; Johnson & Johnson, 1999). However, it is the teachers’ responsibility to choose appropriate visual images that fit not only their curriculum objectives but also their students’ learning needs. The second commonality is that they involve children in the activity of interpreting visual images or objects. Trying to find out what meanings visual images convey requires children to look at them critically and go beyond their aesthetic and formal qualities. However, this implies that teachers are already knowledgeable about methods of interpretation and can formulate and ask the kinds of questions that will help their students to study images and talk about them. A question arises as to whether or not Greek generalist teachers have acquired these kinds of skills during their initial studies.

1.4.3 Resources

As mentioned previously visual culture educators, and especially its advocates in the USA, tend to limit the content of their curricula to visual imagery from popular or mass media

culture. They recommend using a variety of genres and provide teachers with suggestions for practice. Freedman & Schuler (2002), for example, recommend teaching about television because TV imagery plays such a significant role in inculcating consumer culture and informing and forming students' identities. They suggest that children should investigate the multiple levels of meanings TV images convey, and consider their viewing purposes, contexts and responses of different audiences. They claim this will help them to understand the multiple layers of the meanings TV images convey, make connections between television and other genres of visual culture, and understand how television programmes affect their identity formation. Other visual culture educators, such as Lenz (2002), suggest clothing as a focus for lessons in which students examine social roles and its significance in human interaction. Congdon & Blandy (2003) want children to study 'zinesters' (magazines) as reflections of people's culture and modes of communication, while Duncum (2003a) recommends that family photographs, consumer goods, tourist souvenirs, and teenage bedrooms are the focus of study in art lessons to facilitate discussion and art-making.

Toku (2001) selected the genre of 'manga' comics and cartoons for her visual culture curricula because she believed they stimulate children's interest in art and art education. She claims studying them contributes to the development of visual thinking skills, such as observation and articulation, and critical thinking skills, such as questioning, analysis, interpretation, and critical reading and viewing. Turkish art educator Soganci (2005), on the other hand, recommends teaching about folk arts, specifically Turkish Shadow puppet theatre and its cultural context and studying how the figures have been recycled in mass media and advertising imagery. Carpenter (2003), explains how studying a barbershop can give students opportunities to study the aesthetic and social significance of a particular place, and ways it connects with themes of everyday life such as identity, public rituals, etc. Similar content and resources have been suggested by British art and design educators, where design education is well established. Their suggestions include comics and manga, theme parks, family albums, etc (Adams, 2001; Rowberry, 2002; Walden, 1990; Stanley, 2002).

Other suggestions in the literature for content and resources of visual culture lessons include: *Barbie* dolls and action figures like *Action Man*, *She-Ra*, *Power Rangers* and *GI Joe* (Wagner-Ott, 2002); shopping malls and theme parks (Stokrocki, 2001, 2002; Stanley, 2002) the Internet, network games, and digital imagery (Krug, 2002; Hu, 2006); and graffiti (Whitehead, 2004). The list appears endless as visual culture imagery includes almost everything that appeals to the sense of sight. However, there is a need for teachers to develop criteria for selecting their teaching resources. One possible criterion could be the relevance of the selected resources to students' everyday life and experience. This may motivate them and increase their participation in the lessons. Another possible criterion might be teachers' personal preference or knowledge about certain visual culture genres. This may increase their confidence about teaching visual culture. In either case, it is important for teachers to search for and provide their students with background information as this may facilitate class discussion.

1.5 CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

As a result of the review of literature, in this section of the chapter, I present a theoretical framework for a visual culture curriculum. While reviewing this literature enabled me to gain a better understanding of visual culture education, it was difficult to see how it could be incorporated into Greek primary education. At the beginning of the study I was not sure if primary age children would be able to interpret the popular and mass media images they look at and reflect on their viewing practices. I was not also clear in my mind about what genres could be taught in art lessons. This theoretical framework is a collection of the interrelated concepts (visual culture, visual culture education and identity) and determines what is required for the development of a visual culture curriculum. It also guides the empirical research and is anticipated that it would enable me answer the research questions.

Visual culture as defined in this study includes the entire spectrum of visual images from fine and performing arts, crafts and design and material, popular and mass-media culture. Visual culture education is understood as a school reform movement aimed at changing the current practices (Duncum, 2001a, 2002b, 2003b; Tavin & Hausman, 2002; Aguirre, 2004; Freedman, 2003b; Boughton *et al*, 2002). It is defined in this study as the education that

mainly focuses on mass-produced and popular culture images. This definition is adopted for four reasons. Firstly, visual culture is such a broad area of study and there is a need to reduce the genres it includes, especially when designing curriculum units and specifying aims and objectives. Secondly, identity construction, which is one of the main aims of visual culture education, could be better understood if students examine the influences of mass-produced visual images (Freedman & Schuler, 2002). Advocates of visual culture education argue that visual images and the associated experiences of seeing, consuming and appropriating are significant in children's lives and influence the ways they learn, perform, or transform their identities, values and behaviours. Thirdly, making art education relevant to children's lives implies that the curriculum content should include their everyday visual and aesthetic experiences (Duncum, 2002a). It is argued this motivates them, enhances their learning, and links school knowledge to real life world conditions. Engaging children in a dialogue about their everyday visual and aesthetic experiences increase their understanding of the ways they look at, appropriate and interpret visual images and the ways these influence them (Heise, 2004). Lastly, an advantage for generalist primary Greek teachers, who feel uncertain of their knowledge about art history, art criticism and aesthetics, is that it may be easier for them to engage children with interpretation of mainstream mass-produced images rather than those from fine art.

If art education is to help Greek children move beyond passive spectatorship and towards a more critical viewing and appropriation of the visual imagery they encounter in everyday life, the present curriculum would have to change radically. Prominent visual culture educators stress the importance of critical pedagogy, interdisciplinarity, and student's active involvement in their own learning in the art curriculum (Freedman, 2003a, 2003c; Heise, 2004; Tavin, 2003; Efland *et al*, 1996). These concepts would have to permeate the Greek art curriculum. If it embraced these ideas, it is possible that Greek teachers might provide students with opportunities to acquire higher level thinking skills, understand that there are multiple levels of looking and interpretation, and engage in meaning making process and creative responses to their own visual and aesthetic experiences in everyday life. Interpreting visual images that children look at and art-making is understood in this research as an 'uncovering/finding the meaning' process. So, they both are considered main activities that

students could be engaged with in art lessons. The Table below summarises the proposed curriculum model versus the Greek national curriculum (CCTF, Syllabi/ISC, 2003).

TABLE C: Greek National Curriculum (CCTF/ISC, 2003) Vs Visual Culture Curriculum

	CCTF/ISC (2003)	VISUAL CULTURE CURRICULUM
Aims	<p>Pupils should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become familiar with a range of techniques and media • Become familiar with the visual language, art forms and symbols artists use • Respond to, appreciate, understand, analyse and evaluate artworks and art in general • Relate art to its cultural context and realise its contribution to civilization through time 	<p>Pupils should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reflect on their visual experiences and interactions with visual imagery • understand the effects of visual culture on how they construct knowledge about themselves and the world • develop critical viewing and thinking skills • become more critical and discriminate consumers, and more informed participants in society
Content/ Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portrait & Human figure • Western European fine art • Nature & Built environment • Visual elements: dot, line, shape, colour • Art forms: Illustration, Sculpture, Maquettes, Video-art, Icon-painting, etc • Environment-Ecology • Professions: photographer, graphic designer, architect, etc • Art movements: realism, pop-art, expressionism, impressionism, abstract art 	<p>TV imagery, commercials, theme parks, displays in shopping malls, the Internet, video and network games, magazines, clothing, family photographs, consumer goods, tourist souvenirs, teenage bedrooms, objects of material culture, puppet theatre, public rituals, dolls and action figures, graffiti, etc</p>
Core Concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-thematic integration • Interdisciplinarity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical Pedagogy • Interdisciplinarity • Identity • Relevance to children's lives
Activities	<p>art-making role-play</p>	<p>art-making interpretation criticism role-play written work</p>

CHAPTER 2

DESIGN OF RESEARCH –PART I

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the methodology and design of the research. As stated in the Introduction the long term aim of the study as a whole was to determine what kind of curriculum content would enable generalist primary teachers in Greece to teach about visual culture and increase children's understanding of its role in the identity construction. So, curriculum development and evaluation might have been an appropriate method to fulfil this aim. Curriculum development and evaluation, or instructional development/design, or curriculum research are terms researchers have used to describe a process that involves the design and evaluation of instructional resources or educational packs (Kimpston & Rogers, 1986; Richey *et al*, 2004; Newby, 2003; Richey & Klein, 2007; Heinich *et al*, 2002). They describe this kind of research as involving five stages of: (i) analysing the needs of target groups, (ii) determining the content and the educational goals of the instructional resource, (iii) designing the materials, (iv) trying them out, and (v) evaluating and revising them. My decision to design, test out and evaluate new educational materials was based on the premise that this might help generalist primary teachers to teach visual culture in art education. However, I realised this required a thorough preliminary investigation both into children's preferences for and attitudes towards visual culture, and teachers' needs and viewpoints about teaching it. This was necessary before I could determine the content of the educational materials and establish the appropriate teaching methods, guidelines and resources.

However, as the needs analysis would have taken a lot of time in addition to developing and testing out materials I realised that this kind of research was not feasible due to time and financial constraints. So, I considered that it was preferable to conduct only the preliminary investigation as there was a lack of research on these issues in Greece. This led to formulation of the following research questions:

1. What kinds of visual culture genres do primary age children in Greece look at in every day lives?
Which kinds of visual culture genres do they prefer and why?
2. To what extent are they aware of the impact of visual culture on their identity construction and perceptions of selves, others and the world?
3. What do Greek generalist teachers know about primary age children's visual and aesthetic experiences?
Do they use them as curriculum content?
4. What kind of art based curriculum content will increase children's knowledge and understanding about the role of visual culture in their lives?

The reminder of this chapter deals with the research design and selection of the target groups. It also describes the design of data collection instruments, methods of data analysis, ethical considerations and pilot studies for the first part of the research.

2.2 OVERALL PLAN OF ACTION

The research had two interrelated parts. The first consisted of group interviews with Greek primary age children. The second was intended to be a questionnaire survey of Greek primary teachers' views, opinions and needs of teaching about visual culture in art lessons. The overall design of the research method was planned to be emergent. It was anticipated that the analysis of the data collected from the interviews would inform the design of the questionnaire. In particular, they would inform the design of questions about teachers' knowledge of children's visual and aesthetic experiences.

2.3 DESIGN OF GROUP INTERVIEWS

The literature on children and visual culture had revealed that visual images from popular culture constitute one of the main sources of their visual and aesthetic experiences. It also revealed that they use them as resources to inform their understanding about themselves and the world. However, these ideas had never been researched empirically in Greece. So, the aim of the first part of the research was to obtain accurate descriptive information about: (i) primary age children's preferences for visual culture; (ii) their responses to certain kinds of genres; and (iii) whether and to what extent they are aware of the impact of visual culture on how they construct knowledge about themselves and the world.

The sub-questions developed for this part of the research were as follows:

1. Given examples of a range of different kinds of visual culture genres including mass media and fine art, which ones can children identify and how do they name them?
2. Which visual culture genres do they engage themselves with in their everyday lives?
3. Which ones do they like best and why?
4. Do they understand that visual culture is a source for inspiration, stimulation, and imitation?
5. Are they aware of the impact of visual culture on their identity construction and perceptions of self, other and the world?

Texts on research methods by Cohen *et al* (2000), Mason (1996), Robson (1993), Denscombe (1995), and Lewis (1992) suggested that the appropriate method for answering these kinds of questions is group interviews. They describe them as having the following characteristics: (i) involving organised discussion with selected group of individuals; (ii) enabling insights into their understanding of the topic; (iii) providing opportunities to obtain various perspectives on the same question; and (iv) encouraging investigation into and comparison of differences between participants' preferences. In this case, organised discussion with primary age schoolchildren sought to obtain general background information about their experiences, preferences, and attitudes towards visual culture and enable insights into their understanding of the impact of visual culture on their lives. They also sought to determine differences in viewing practices between boys and girls or different age groups. I

hypothesised that the informal nature of group interviews would motivate children in Greece to participate and thus more information would be provided about their preferences for visual culture and ways they constructed knowledge about themselves and the world than individual interviews.

According to Gibbs (1997), a major weakness of group interviews is that the findings cannot be generalised because of the limited number of participants. However, this was counterbalanced in this instance by the fact that the interaction between the child participants in the group was likely to highlight a range of views about how visual images affect identity construction. I anticipated that interaction between participants would also provide opportunities for me to determine how they were influenced by each other's comments and modified their ideas after listening to people around them (Denscombe, 1995; Krueger, 1994; Kitzinger, 1994, 1995). Denscombe (1995) argues that group interviews are more fruitful than individual ones because they broaden the range of responses, activate memory, and encourage participants to overcome anxiety or hesitation about offering views, opinions, or thoughts.

2.3.1 Target Population and Sampling

The target population and sample size was determined by the constraints of time, finance and the nature of the interview strategy. Therefore, I decided to limit the target population to children from four primary schools, two each in rural and urban districts. The rural district of North Ileia in the Peloponese was chosen because I was born and worked there early in my teaching career. The urban district of Athens, (*Municipality of Athens*) was chosen because the population is more culturally diverse there than in any other city or town in Greece (National Statistical Service of Greece, 2001). Two schools were selected from each district to give a balance of geographic background. These four schools followed the same curriculum and organised school time the same way as is the custom in all public schools in Greece. They were selected mainly because they were near the centre of each district and provided easy access.

A decision was taken to include twelve mixed-sex groups of children, three from each school, in order to ensure a wide range of viewpoints and opinions. According to Lewis (1992) and Stewart & Shamdasani (1990), age has a significant impact on the kinds and types of responses generated in group interviews. In order to avoid age hierarchies and domination of younger by older children within a group, I designated three different age groups consisting of children aged 6-7, children aged 8-9, and children aged 10-12. Because I wanted to give the same opportunities to each member to participate a decision was taken to include 10 students in each group. This group size is considered manageable by other researchers and can reveal intra-group dynamics (Cohen *et al*, 2000; Krueger, 1994; Lewis, 1992). The participants for each group were selected randomly from a list provided beforehand by classroom teachers. In order to prevent withdrawals on the day of the interview, I followed Morgan's (1997) suggestion to over-recruit by 20 per cent of the total population. So, five more students from each list were selected in the same way.

2.3.2 The Interview Schedule

The design and the content of the interviews was informed by research reports by Denscombe (1995), Fornos *et al* (2005) and Buckingham (1993; 1996) and texts about educational research methods by Cohen *et al* (2000), Lewis (1992), Kreuger (1994), Stewart & Shamdasani (1990), and Morgan (1997). Seven open-ended questions were developed to explore children's daily experiences of, and attitudes towards visual culture (Appendix, 6). It was anticipated that this number would enable good management of time as well as give opportunities for all respondents to answer. Powney & Watts (1987) and Kreuger's (1994) ideas on types of questions to be included in interviews were followed. I decided not to use 'Why' questions which force participants, especially children, to provide quick answers. Instead, I used phrases such as 'can you explain why..?' and 'is there any particular reason why...?'. The interviews included factual and attitudinal questions. These used phrases like 'what do you think...?', 'what do you like best...', 'where do you see...', and 'do you think that...', in the hope these would make children feel comfortable and relaxed. Factual questions sought information about the visual images Greek children looked at in everyday life. The attitudinal ones enquired their preferences for visual culture and understanding of its impact.

Informal piloting of possible questions with primary age children in *Greek Language Classes* (GLC) in London revealed that they found it very difficult to talk about how visual culture influenced them. So, I developed four questions that would enable me determine how and to what extent they were influenced by it (Appendix, 6). The first question asked what they discussed about visual culture genres with friends and peers. According to Thompson (2005), play and work with peers and adults enable children to accomplish construction of knowledge about themselves and the world they inhabit. Peer discussion especially plays a central role in appropriating information from the adult world, and internalising society and culture. I anticipated that asking children whether they talked to each other about the images they looked at in everyday life and what they talked about, might lead to some insights into the ways they selected and appropriated information from visual culture. The second question I developed inquired into the content of children's individual drawings/paintings at home and/or school and their sources of inspiration. It was anticipated that this question would reveal influences by visual images and enable insights into their awareness of them. The third question developed asked about children's favourite heroes/heroines and if they imitated them in role-play. This question was included because literature review revealed that heroes and heroines feature strongly in children's leisure time and provide them with a rich source for imaginative role-play (Marsh, 2000). The fourth and last question developed inquired into what children think they learn from visual images in everyday life.

Although Lewis (1992) and Gibbs (1997) suggested group interviews should last from one to two hours, I considered this too long for primary age children. I decided to allow forty minutes for each interview because this is the average time for teaching a lesson in Greek primary schools. Children in Greek schools are engaged with activities such as sports and games or preparing their homework during the afternoon school programme. A decision was taken to conduct the interviews between 14.00 and 16.00 because this would not interrupt any school lessons. I planned to arrange an informal session, seat children in a circle, facing each other, and provide visual resources together with questions in order to facilitate discussion (Dick, 1998; Kitzinger, 1995; Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). I also planned to inform children about my identity at the beginning of each interview and the purposes of the

discussion and set guidelines so that they understood what it was expected of them, and to promise confidentiality and anonymity.

2.3.3 Visual Research Tool

According to Dilley (2000), gathering information about interview subjects is an important step in preparing for a group discussion. This process provides researchers with ideas for questions and helps them to understand the cultural context in which they live. The literature review about visual culture and Greek primary art education had informed the questions I wanted to ask. However, when I developed the interview schedule I had to find ways of phrasing group questions and instructions that were appropriate for the specific target population.

My work in *Greek Language Classes (Τμήματα Μητρικής Γλώσσας)* in North London gave me opportunities to talk informally with my students about the visual images they looked in their everyday lives before the research began. These discussions, which were in English language, took place in June/July 2005 and September 2005 with children of three different age groups (Appendix, 7). One important finding of these preliminary discussions was that some children did not understand the term ‘visual image’. When I asked them to define it the majority thought it meant ‘images we have in our mind’ or ‘make up in our minds’ (Group Z, 17-28/6/05). It was evident that they perceived ‘visual images’ as a synonym for ‘mental images’, images people see in their mind’s eye.

Because the actual group interviews were to be conducted in primary schools in Greece, I had to select a Greek word for ‘visual image’. The Greek word ‘εικόνα’ (‘econa’) means both ‘icon’ and ‘visual image’. I realised there was a risk Greek children might get confused if I used the word ‘εικόνες’ (visual images) without showing any. At this point, a decision was taken to begin the interviews by showing representative examples of some visual images that children might look at in their everyday lives. I planned to stick images for representing visual culture genres on white cards and show them one by one. However, there was a risk the children to get influenced by this presentation and start talking only about the ones included in the visual research tool. So, I decided to hide the cards with images after

the presentation. I anticipated that seeing images in advance might help children to: (i) understand the term ‘visual image’; (ii) remember the kinds of images they look at in their everyday lives; (iii) relax and enjoy the discussion; and (iv) help me open up the discussion. Moreover, showing the children images from a variety of visual culture genres would enable find out which of them they could recognise, establish their characteristics and label them.

The main informational resource for selecting visual images and developing the visual research tool was the literature reviewed and informal discussions with the students in my *Greek Language Classes*. Although there are many genres of visual culture, American advocates of visual culture education mainly discuss the mass media and popular culture images that dominate public and private spaces in the USA (Tavin & Anderson, 2003; Freedman & Schuler, 2002; Stokrocki, 2002). Informal discussions with my students in London also confirmed that they looked at visual images from television, films and the Internet. But I was concerned that showing Greek children visual images from popular culture only would exclude possibilities of discussing other kinds of visual experiences of for example fine or folk art.

The search for selection of images was carried out as follows. Walker & Chaplin’s (1997), comprehensive list of visual culture genres (Appendix 5), which is one of the most detailed available, was consulted. They divide visual culture into four main categories: ‘fine arts’, ‘crafts and design’, ‘performing arts and arts of spectacle’ and ‘mass and electronic media’. I drew on these categories to select a wide range of genres I considered relevant to Greek children’s life and excluded others (Appendix 8). It was important that the visual images selected for each of the genres were relevant to the Greek socio-cultural context. Between October and December 2005, I scrutinised Websites of Greek TV channels, museums, newspapers, magazines and student textbooks in order to be informed about recent TV series, museum exhibitions, and sporting and other events happening in Greece. I also studied recent research and articles about Greek children and mass media culture in order to decide which visual images from films or TV shows to select (Diamantakou, 2004; Panaekas, 1998; Panousis, 2004; Galani & Kyrides, 2005). Finally, I consulted Greek teacher friends in order to create and finalise the visual research tool.

In the end the visual research tool was comprised of twenty-one visual culture genres, which were: fine arts (painting and sculpture), religious icons, architecture and urban design, crafts (embroidery, wood carving and ceramics), graphic design (illustrated books), graffiti, performances (theatre, shadow theatre, dance/ballet, Greek traditional dance, pop concert), carnival, parades/street marches, fashion shows, athletic events, shopping malls and theme parks, films, TV programmes, advertisements, photography, comics/animated cartoons, magazines and newspapers, computer/console games, the Web.

I decided to include more than one image for each genre. I anticipated that this would help children concentrate on the genre per se, identify and name it. The number of the images for each genre was not fixed because I considered that children's familiarity/unfamiliarity and excitement about some of them might played some role in identifying them. For example, I included only two examples of religious images because I know that children in Greece see them at home, school or church, while I included five images of buildings of different architectural types to help them suggest a name for all of them. All images were downloaded from the Internet as this was less time consuming than trying to find authentic artefacts, religious icons, magazines, etc, to bring in class or visiting shopping malls, neighbourhoods, and museums. Details for each image are provided in the 'List of Figures' while in this section they are listed as I showed them to the children.

Figures 1a-1g: TV Programmes



<http://tv.antenna.gr/articleDetail/0,4051,120320,00.html>



<http://tv.antenna.gr/resources/images/af92c446-041e-4824-b3e9-5945ac9655ab.jpg>



<http://edadepiedrix.wordpress.com>

The tool included three visual images from current television shows and series. These represented the logos of two TV shows *Big Brother* and *Fame Story Live*, and the main characters of telenovela *Rebelde Way* (*Anipotaktes Kardies*). I selected them because I considered them well-known TV shows and series in Greek TV.

Figures 2a-2f: Comics/ Animated Cartoons



www.allkidsmurals.com/spongebob.html



<http://www.pointeacademy.com/indexnew.html>



<http://www.fanpop.com/spots/the-smurfs/images/251171>



<http://www.popartuk.com/tv/looney-tunes/daffy-duck-in-warner-brothers-looney-tunes-pp0638-poster.asp>



http://www.autographsmovieposters.com/Popeye_Collection.htm



<http://xray.yooblog.gr/2008/04/07/314/>

Six still images in the category of animated cartoons and comics were included in the tool. These were from *SpongeBob Squarepants*, *Mickey Mouse*, *The Strumfs*, *Duffy Duck*, *Popeye* and *Asterix and Obelix*. They were included because Greek TV channels broadcast these kinds of animated cartoons. Also there are comic books with these characters publicised in Greek language.

Figures 3a, 3b: Athletic Events



<http://www.alpha.gr/page/default.asp?id=681&la=1>



<http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/low/football/africa/4436836.stm>

For the category of athletic events the tool included two images: (i) a snapshot from the Olympic Games of 2004 mainly because they were regarded by most Greek people as a very special event and some sport shows and advertisements still refer to them; and (ii) a snapshot from a football match because this is one of the most popular sports in Greece. Image 3a portrays *Mirella Maniani*, who is a javelin throw athlete, holding her bronze medal. Image 3b depicts *Olympiakos* football-player *Yaya Toure*.

Figures 4a-4c: Product Design: Toys



<http://www.toyshop.ch/playmobil.htm>



<http://original.britannica.com/eb/art-10095/Billions-of-DreamsTM-Barbie-designed-to-honour-the-production-of>



<http://www.reason.com/blog/show/120145.html>

The tool also included three images in the category of product design targeted at children. The images were of the toys known as *Play Mobil*, *Barbie*, and *Ninja Turtles*. Their selection was based on an assumption that these are well-known among children.

Figures 5a, 5b: Photography



[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/
Image:Family_trip_to_Oregon.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Family_trip_to_Oregon.jpg)



[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/
Image:Family-House-1969.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Family-House-1969.jpg)

Two images in the category of photography were included in the tool. I selected family photographs because I anticipated that children would be familiar with this genre and could refer to personal experiences of taking and viewing photographs.

Figures 6a, 6b: Carnival



[http://commons.wikimedia.org/
wiki/Image:The_Night_Parade.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:The_Night_Parade.jpg)



[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/
Image:Malmedy_carnaval_Luc_Viatour_3.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Malmedy_carnaval_Luc_Viatour_3.jpg)

Carnival is part of Greek cultural heritage and tradition. It lasts three weeks in February or March and during this period children and adults participate in parades and parties organised by local societies in Greece. Masquerading is the main custom of this period and many cities and towns in Greece, like Patras, Rethimno, and Moschato organise events that include balls

and parades of masquerade groups (Politis, 1987; Siole, 2005; Molinos, 1993). Schools also organise fancy-dress parties for students. So, the tool included two images in this category.

Figures 7a, 7b: Parade/Street March



http://www.kyparissia.gr/event_39_2_gr.html



http://gym-ammoich.flo.sch.gr/oxi_parelasi_02_03.htm

The tradition of parades/street marches has its roots in 18th century in Greece. Schools participated in national celebration for the Greek war of independence in 25 March 1924 for first time. However, it was only on 25 March 1936 that student parades were established as formal and complementary to military ones (Papaioannou & Papaioannou, 1989; Frangoudaki & Dragona, 1997; ‘Ios tis Kiriakis’, 1995). Nowadays, military and school parades/street marches still take place in Greek cities twice a year, on 28 October and 25 March, during national celebrations. Despite criticisms that they are of no pedagogical or educational value and promote militaristic ideals (‘Ios tis Kiriakis’, 1995), they constitute part of school life and children are obliged to participate in them. Therefore, the tool included two visual images in this category. Image 7a portrays primary school students participating in the parade/street march for the national celebration for the 25th of March. Image 7b portrays high school students participating in the parade/street march for the national celebration for the 28th October 1940. Participating students usually wear either traditional costumes or school uniforms and hold the Greek flag.

Figures 8a-8e: Magazines, Newspapers



The tool included five images from the category: magazines and newspapers. These images were from front-covers of magazines and newspapers commonly found in Greek bookstores, such as *7 Meres TV*, *National Geographic*, *Mirror*, and newspapers such as *Ta Nea* and *Ee Kathimerini*. According to the Greek Publicity Guide (<http://www.hri.org/nodes/grmm.html>) there are more than three-hundred magazines published in Greece, the content of which varies. According to the same source, eleven daily, seventeen Sunday, and twenty weekly newspapers are published in Athens. Local press and other monthly or bi-monthly newspapers are also published. I assumed, therefore, that children were familiar with these genres as I knew parents frequently purchased them.

Figures 9a-9c: Films



<http://www.typowriters.com/HP/Harry%20Potter.htm>



<http://thecia.com.au/reviews/lord-of-the-rings-1.shtml>



<http://www.starwarped.faketrix.com/Star-Wars-wallpapers.htm>

Three still visual images in the category of films were included in the tool. The first portrayed the main characters from the film *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, the second was from *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Rings* and portrayed the characters *Frodo*, *Pippin*, and *Merry*; and the third portrayed *Darth Vader* from the film *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Again*. They were selected because children in pilot discussions in *Greek Language Classes* in London talked about them enthusiastically. I anticipated that children in Greece had watched these films as well and would be able to talk about their content and context.

Figures 10a-10e: Performances:

Theatre, Shadow Theatre, Ballet, Greek traditional dance, Pop concert



www.oikade.gr/images/data/images/noname.jpg



<http://www.kameraarkasi.org/kompozisyon/golge/golgeoyunu/yunan.html>



http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Sleeping_Beauty_Royal_Ballet_2008.jpg



<http://www.carnival-of-xanthi.gr/programm-old2007.php?category=35&lang=el>



<http://clubs.pathfinder.gr/funfanclub/356393>

Five images in the category of performing arts were included in the visual research tool. The first was a visual image from a theatre performance of a play called *Paramythi horis Onoma* (*A Tale without a Title*). I chose this genre because primary age children in Greece often attend theatre performances during a school year. The second was an image of Shadow puppet theatre (*Karagiozis*) performance. This was selected because children are familiar with *Karagiozis* as they can watch it at school, or on TV. The third was an image from a ballet performance. Although children in rural district were likely to have fewer opportunities than those in Athens to watch ballet, I anticipated that they could identify it because the Greek TV broadcasts such kind of performances from time to time. The fourth was an image of traditional Greek dance performance. In my experience, children in Greece are familiar with traditional Greek dances either because they are taught them at school or

because they can watch such kinds of performances live or on TV. The fifth was an image of a pop concert. It was anticipated that most children have seen similar images in TV programmes or in real concerts.

Figures 11a-11e: Architecture and Urban Design



http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:2006_01_21_Ath%C3%A8nes_Parth%C3%A9non.JPG



http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:%CE%9A%CE%B1%CF%80%CE%BD%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%B1%CF%81%CE%AD%CE%B1_%CE%91%CE%B8%CE%AE%CE%BD%CE%B1.jpg



http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Samuel_vale_house_16s07.JPG



<http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Mk01n101.jpg>



http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Athens_2004_Main_Olympic_Stadium.jpg

Five visual images of the buildings showing different architectural styles were included in the tool. The first was a visual image from the Parthenon, an ancient temple from 5th century BC. It was chosen because it is one of the most well-known buildings in Greece and has symbolic significance of classical civilisation. The second was a Byzantine church from 12th century AC selected because these buildings are very common in Greece. The third was a visual image of a block of flats. I anticipated the children would identify this kind of

architectural style because such block of flats can be found in most urban as well as rural districts in Greece. The fourth was a visual image of the neoclassical building of the Greek National Library in Athens, built in late 19th century. This was chosen because it is included in the student textbook for Social Studies for Grade 5 and for Environmental Studies for Grade 3. Finally, the fifth was a visual image of the *Olympic Athletic Centre*, built in 1982, chosen because I anticipated the children would recognise it as the place where major athletic events, like the Olympic Games 2004, had taken place.

Figures 12a, 12b: Computer/Console Games



<http://movies.ee/pildid/uudised/ActionMan.jpg>



http://www.jeuxvideo.com/articles/0000/00001766_test.htm

The research tool included two visual images from console and computer games called *Action Man* and *Power Rangers*. I selected these particular images because I anticipated that children were familiar with these games as I had seen them advertised on Greek TV.

Figures 13a, 13b: Religious Icons



http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Christ_Icon_Sinai_6th_century.jpg



<http://agiographia.blogspot.com>

Religious images constituted a second separate visual culture genre mainly because religion is an important part of Greek peoples' lives and religious images inform the majority of Greek people's religious experience and practice (Varvounis, 1995; Cormack, 1997). So, reproductions of (i) Christ and (ii) Archangel Gabriel's icons were included in the tool. Similar reproductions are included in student textbooks for the subjects of religion and language as well as history for Grade 5, which focuses on the Byzantine era.

Figures 14a-14c: Crafts: Embroidery, Woodcarving, Ceramics



<http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:LoveSpoons.JPG>



<http://www.morguefile.com/archive/?display=183762&>



http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Embroidery_Kelim.jpg

In this study I adopted Burgess' definition (2000, p. 164) of crafts as 'utilitarian or decorative objects the creation of which requires a high degree of skilled knowledge using specialist tools'. I selected three images of woodcarving, pottery, and embroidery for this category. In particular, the tool included one image of decorative wooden spoons, one of ceramic plates and vases, and another of an embroidered rug. I anticipated that Greek children are familiar with all these kinds of artefacts and see them at home, museums, or tourist shops.

Figures 15a-15e: Advertisements



<http://publicite-parfum.miniature-parfum.fr/experiences17.html>



<http://themes.belchfire.net/index.php?automodule=downloads&showfile=3045>



www.theorder.co.uk/directory/reviews/cl75_poppy/



<http://www.asadviser.com/img/200603/Adidas-a3-Gigaride.JPG>



<http://www.visit4info.com/search/index.cfm?display=i&page=2>

Five visual images in the category of advertisements were included in the tool. These showed *Eau de Merveilles* perfume, *Coca cola* soft drink, *Siemens* mobile phone, *Adidas* athletic shoes, and *Elvive* shampoo. I anticipated that selecting and including more than one reproduction of advertisements it would help children talk about the particular genre and not about the advertised products.

Figures 16a- 16c: Shopping Mall & Theme Parks



<http://www.skyscrapercity.com/showthread.php?t=286676>

http://www.foiltec.de/projects/athens_mall

<http://www.cityofathens.gr/eksereyniste-tin-athina/oikogeneies-paidia>

According to Stockrocki (2001), shopping malls are sites of consumerism and entertainment that offer to people intense aesthetic experiences. So, two images of a shopping mall in Athens called *The Mall* were included in the tool. It also included an image from a theme park called *Allou Fan Park* located in Athens. The rationale was that theme parks offer children experiences in which bodily sensations play significant role (Stanley, 2002; 2005). *Allou Fun Park* is also well-known to children from advertisements on TV.

Figures 17a-17g: Fine Arts



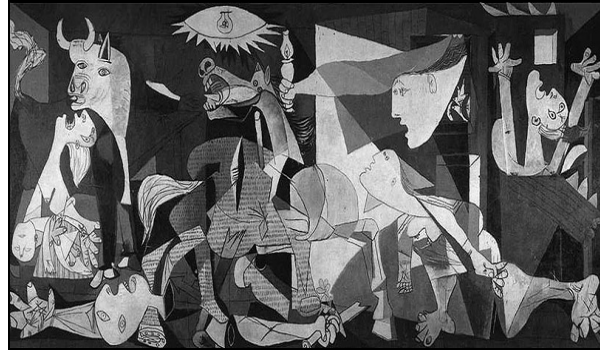
http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Leonardo_da_Vinci_042-mod.jpg



http://www.nationalgallery.gr/html/gr/sylloges/19os/ithografia_b.htm



http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Van_Gogh_Sunflowers_Neue_Pinakothek_8872.jpg



http://www.artquotes.net/masters/picasso/pablo_guernica1937.htm



http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Cycladic_female_figurine_3.jpg



http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:NAMA_St%C3%A8le_d%27H%C3%A8g%C3%A8s%C3%B4.jpg



http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Parthenon_frieze_north_XLIII.JPG

The tool included a fine art category. It included examples of seven paintings and sculptures as follows: (i) Da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*; (ii) Gyzis' *Koukou*; (iii) Picasso's *Guernica*; (iv) Van Gogh's *Sunflowers*; (v) a Cycladic marble figurine; (vi) the grave stele of Hegeso; and (vii) a section of the Parthenon frieze. The particular artworks were chosen because they were included in the children's language or history textbooks.

Figures 18a-18e: Graphic Design: Illustrated Books



<http://www.livanis.gr/ViewShopCategory.aspx?Id=44619>



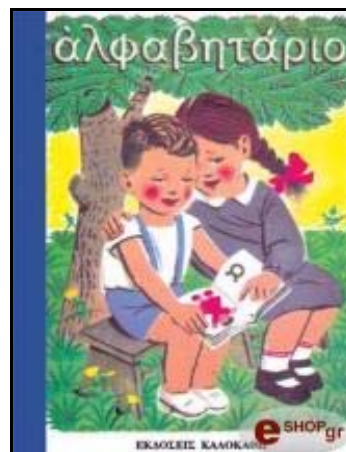
<http://www.perizitito.gr/authors.php?authorid=3079&totitems=1050&page=15>



<http://www.perizitito.gr/authors.php?authorid=21893>



<http://www.primedu.uoa.gr/sciedu/BIBLIO/bookE.htm>



<http://www.mjpo.gov.cy/mjpo/mjpo.nsf/All/47BF894DA3587B3CC225702900239399?OpenDocument&print>

The tool included five images in the category graphic design. These included book covers of children's fairy tales, fiction and textbooks and were chosen because children read such kinds of books in school as well as in their free time.

Figures 19a, 19b: Graffiti



<http://www.morguefile.com/archive/?display=143656&>



<http://www.morguefile.com/archive/?display=143707&>

Street graffiti as a popular form of graphic design is accessible to students in most environments (Whitehead, 2004). Children in Greece often have opportunities to look at street graffiti, especially in big towns. So, the tool included two images in this category.

Figures 20a, 20b: Fashion Show



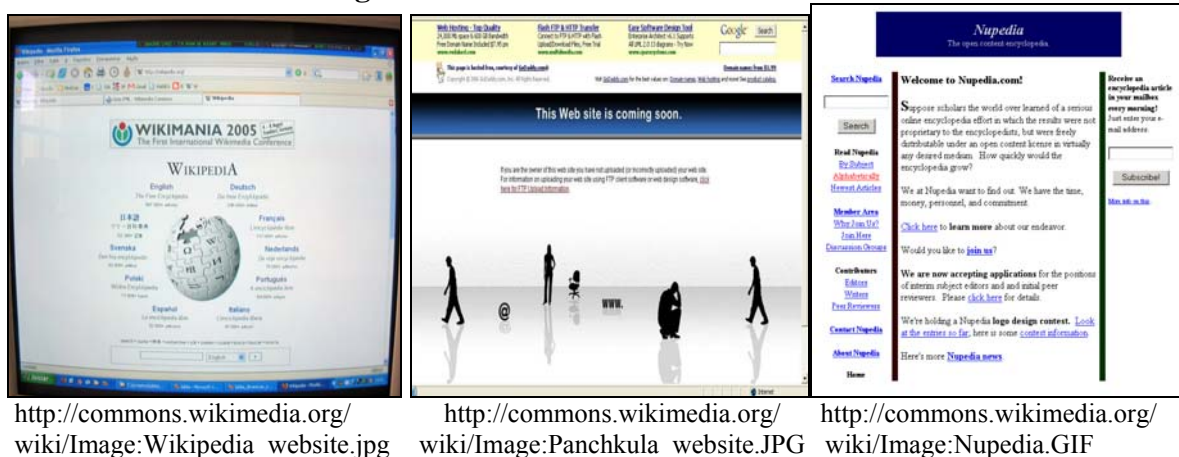
http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Michon_schur.jpg.



http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Joss_Stone_Heart_Truth4.jpg

Two images in the category of 'fashion show' were included in the visual research tool. I anticipated that children were familiar with fashion shows because television often broadcasts segments of them and magazines include photographs of models on catwalks.

Figures 21a-21c: The WEB



Finally, three images in the category ‘The Web’ were included in the visual research tool. These were downloaded of web pages from *Wikipedia* free-content encyclopaedia, *Panchkula* website and *Nupedia*’s site. Although I thought it was unlikely children were familiar with these sites, I anticipated that they might be able to identify them as ‘the Internet’ or ‘the Web’ and considered them characteristic examples of web pages.

2.3.4 Method of Data Collection

I tape recorded the group discussions and took notes before the interviews about students’ socioeconomic status, ethnicity, age and gender and wrote down comments immediately afterwards about their attitudes in order to facilitate data analysis and writing up the research report. After transcribing the interviews, I analysed their content in order to identify patterns that appeared within single groups or among the various groups. I used the computer software package ATLAS.ti for analysis because of the volume of the data because it was easier and quicker to code text on screen than it manually cut and paste different pieces of text. ATLAS.ti was chosen over other packages primarily because it gave me the opportunity to import documents in Greek language directly from the Word processing programme. I chose to investigate children’s age, gender, geographic location of school, ethnicity and sociocultural background across schools and across groups in order to determine differences in outcomes of interviews. Also I examined pre-existing social relationships between group members and group dynamics in order to find out any bearings on the nature of the group interview data.

2.3.5 Steps in Data Analysis

The method adopted for the analysis of interview data was informed by texts about qualitative data analysis by Ritsie & Spencer (1994), Bryman & Burgess (1994), Denzin & Lincoln (2005), and Welsh (2002). It involved the following steps: First, after the interviews were transcribed, I read them through several times in order to acquire an overall view of the children's responses. Second, code names were ascribed to each school. Third, the transcriptions were imported into the software package Atlas-ti I. Fourth, I developed categories, attributed linguistic codes to them to identify them easily (Appendix 14). I also wrote down notes about what I concerned to be crucial ideas for data analysis and patterns emerging from the children's responses that had theoretical significance. Fifth, I selected segments of the interview transcripts that corresponded to each category, code or notes, and created clusters of codes according to common subject matter. Finally, I imported the notes taken during the interviews in Atlas-ti and I used them as memos in order to help me report children's behaviour and group dynamics.

According to Lewis (1992, p.419), numerical summaries of individual's responses are inappropriate for group interviews as some group members may remain silent or not express an opinion. For example, they might be timid, need more thinking time, or be talked over by more dominant members. Nevertheless, I identified a need to indicate how many children within and across groups gave similar responses to certain questions and to weight responses. I decided, therefore, to use the words 'majority', 'some', 'many', 'few' and 'very few' to indicate how many children gave similar responses. But I had to establish some criteria for their use in advance. So, when the term majority appears it indicates more than half of the children in a group. 'Many' indicates 40-60 children, and 'some' indicates 20-30. 'Few' indicates 10-20, and 'very few' between to 1-10.

2.3.5 Ethical Issues

Ethical considerations for group interviews are similar to those for other research methods. Permission for conducting them was obtained from the Greek Pedagogical Institute (20.12.2005), which is the authorized institution of the Greek Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs. Moreover, parents of the children in the schools concerned

informed about the research and I sought their permission beforehand through a written letter. I also sought permission from headteachers, classroom teachers in the schools involved in the research (1-15 January 2006). They were informed in advance about the researcher's professional identity, the research aim and financing, procedures and the expected benefits of the inquiry in person and through a written letter (Appendix 9). Questions were invited and evidence supported that the research had the approval of the Greek Pedagogical Institute as well as the contact details of the Director of the PhD programme of studies in London were given. The headteachers of the four target schools were contacted in person beforehand in order to arrange a time for visiting their schools and conduct the interviews (15-20 January 2005).

Ethical guidelines set by Roehampton Ethics Board (2005) and Greek Pedagogical Institute were taken into account in the selection of the visual images used in the visual research tool. For example, visual images that conveyed messages of violence and sex, or promoted sales of products such as alcohol and cigarettes, were excluded. Children in the interview groups were given the right to non-participation before we started discussion. I informed them that participating in them was not obligatory and would in any way affect their grades. I also told them they could at any stage withdraw their agreement to participate. Assurances were given that all data collected would remain confidential and be used strictly for the purposes of the research. Following Gibbs (1997) advice, the children were encouraged to keep confidential what they hear during the interviews. According to Cohen *et al* (2000, p.61), "the information provided by participants should in no way reveal their identity". So, their names, the address and name of their schools, or personal details have been replaced by codes (Bell, 1999). Finally, raw and processed data will be stored and locked in my office in Greece for three years after the completion of the thesis.

2.4 PILOT TESTS

The questions for the group interviews were piloted on 25 November and 19-20 December 2005 following Krueger's (1994) advice. They suggested that pilot testing group discussions should be carried out in several stages, such as asking experts to review the questions, and inviting representatives of the target population to comment on the questions. As stated

previously, informal discussions with my students in *Greek Language Classes* enabled me phrase the questions and structure the discussion. So, instead of asking children whether they think they have been influenced by the visual images they look at, I decided to simplify the question by splitting it into three sub-questions:

‘What do you talk about the images you see with your friends? ’;

‘What is the subject matter of your drawings/paintings?’/ ‘Where do you get ideas from for your drawings/paintings?’

‘Who is your favourite hero/heroine and why?’/ ‘Have you ever pretended to be your favourite hero/heroine or played out scenes from your favourite TV programme?’/ ‘What was that?’

The final schedule included eight questions. After its completion, two pilot tests took place on 25 November and 19-20 December 2005. In both cases the nature of the questions, characteristics of the respondents, interaction between children and moderator procedures were taken into consideration when reflecting on the data collected. The purpose of the tests was to evaluate the design of the visual tool, structure and wording of the questions, questioning route and dissemination process.

2.4.1 Pilot Test I

This Pilot Test was conducted in a *Greek Language Class* in Friern Barnet, London, where I worked as teacher at the time (25 November 2005). This school had 110 Greek/Cypriot students aged between 5 and 16 who learned the Greek language, aspects of history and religion, traditions, and music. Year 4, the class I taught, participated in the first pilot test. The purpose was to evaluate the design and content of the visual research tool, sequencing and wording of the questions and to consider the appropriate size of groups and time needed for the discussion.

Twelve nine year-old Greek-Cypriot children, who were second and third generation immigrants to the UK, attended this class. On 25 November 2005, seven boys and three girls participated in a group discussion in their own classroom that lasted 35 minutes. I explained that I needed their help as I was planning a research project in Greece with primary age

children. I also tested some rules I had devised to maintain discipline [e.g. asking them not to speak all together and stay quiet when a classmate spoke].

The whole discussion took place in English. This gave me an opportunity to check the wording of the questions in the language of the thesis. The children understood every question. However, in the responses to the question about preferences for visual culture genres they used a limited vocabulary. ‘Because it has fun’, was a common answer. To follow up I asked them ‘What does fun mean for you?’. They started to describe scenes from favourite movies, TV shows and comics or games they played on their computers.

The discussion started by showing children the 72 images listed in the visual tool mentioned previously, which were the same as those I anticipated showing in Greece. Showing the visual images along with my introductory comments did enable children understand what the discussion supposed to be and clarified the term ‘visual image’. They recognised most of the visual images but not some that were specific to Greece i.e. shadow theatre (*Karagiozis*) and Greek traditional dances. This was probably because they lived in the UK and did not know much about Greek or Greek/Cypriot culture.

Although I showed the children images from a range of visual culture genres, in response to the question ‘which ones they looked at most the majority mainly mentioned mass-produced ones. One or two of them referred to shopping malls, ice-skating, and the natural environment, and in particular trees and parks. The television show ‘The Simpsons’, the film ‘Star Wars’ and visual images from computer games such as ‘Super Mario’ were favourites. Since they talked mainly about mass-produced visual images I assumed that the presentation of images from other genres like fine arts, crafts, toys, and graffiti included in the visual research tool did not influence their responses. So, I decided to present the visual images in the tool the same way in a second pilot study in order to test if it worked with primary age children in Greece.

A finding from the first pilot study was that the size of the group was too large. During the discussion with the GLC group discipline problems occurred. Discipline is one of the major

problems at GLCs because many children consider it pointless to learn a language that will have a very limited role in their future lives, and are often too tired to participate fully in the lesson because they attend them after their English school (Lambropoulos & Christopoulou, 2005). Children appeared to view the session primarily as a play activity because they did not use schoolbooks and spoke in English. As if to confirm this assumption, one boy asked me ‘if this was a real lesson’. Despite my affirmation that it was a different kind of lesson, they continued to misbehave, talk to each other and cause disruption.

I concluded that a group of ten children was quite big. They could not all respond to questions such as ‘Where do you get ideas from for your drawings/paintings’. It was evident, therefore that thirty-five minutes for discussions was too short with a group of this size. Some children needed more time to think before responding. This meant that I had to press them for quick answers or skip a question and continue with others. During discussion, one boy who said he preferred the ‘Star Wars’ movie started to describe a poster in his bedroom. It was clear then that most of these children decorated their private spaces with posters, photographs, objects and memoirs they found significant. At this point, I realised that including a question in the schedule about bedroom decorations would give me clues about ways children use visual images in everyday life. The literature confirms that getting children and teenagers to talk about their bedrooms, helps researchers understand who they are in relation to the larger culture (Brown *et al*, 1994).

After completing the first pilot study I made three significant changes in the research design: (i) to reduce the number of participants from ten to six in order to give each individual an equal opportunity to participate in the discussion and for reasons of discipline; (ii) to increase the number of groups from twelve to twenty-four in order to get responses from as many children as possible; and (iii) to include the question ‘What kind of images do you hang on your bedroom walls?’ (Appendix 6).

2.4.2 Pilot Test II

The second Pilot Test was conducted in a primary school in the Municipality of Athens (19 and 20 December 2005). It was one of 185 inner-city schools in Athens and is referred to

throughout the thesis as school X. It had population of 130 children, 40% of whom were first or second generation immigrants to Greece. According to the school records, the majority (60%) were working-class. The purpose of the pilot study was to evaluate the following aspects of the design: (i) group interview route; (ii) clarity of the instructions given to children; (iii) the size of group and time needed for discussions; (iv) my role as a moderator; and (v) possible researcher bias.

The pilot study was conducted during the afternoon programme between 14.00 and 16.30. However, in selecting this time I failed to take into account the fact that only 50 children, the majority of whom were immigrants, attended afternoon classes regularly. According to the teachers at this school and the Greek Teachers' Union (Didaskaliki Omospondia Elladas), this is a common problem for most schools in Athens and elsewhere in Greece.

In the initial research design, I proposed to interview three age groups (aged 6-7, 8-9 and 10-12). However, the classroom teachers advised me to interview children aged six and seven separately because the 6-year-old children were easily distracted and needed very specific brief instructions. So, four mixed gender groups were organised according to children's ages. Each group consisted of six children aged 6, six children aged 7, six children aged 8-9, and six children aged 10-11. The children were selected randomly from a list provided by each classroom teacher. The groups of children were interviewed in a spare room at the school for an average of forty minutes (thirty-five for the youngest age group and forty-five minutes for the oldest one). At the end of each group discussion, I drew a diagram of the seating arrangements and wrote notes about children's behaviour and reactions.

The interview began with the explanation that I wanted to find out what kind of visual images they looked at most and which ones they preferred. To begin with, I showed them images genre by genre and encouraged children to identify them and comment on them. When I asked them to tell me which kinds of genres they looked most at every day life, they picked out the built environment, mass media, and family photos. On the other hand, they mentioned comics, cartoons, TV programmes and video games when they were asked which

kinds of images they preferred most. I concluded that their responses were not too over-influenced by the presentation of visual images therefore.

Regarding the sequence and wording of questions, the interview flowed without any particular problems. The children seemed to understand almost every question and there were very few cases where I had to repeat a question or change the phrasing. Only children aged 10-11 understood the question ‘What do you think you learn from the visual images you see in everyday life?’. However, they talked about behavioural patterns and morals. Although the younger children got confused, they tried to give an answer.

On reflection, there was one obvious instance of researcher bias when I influenced the answers. This happened when I asked the question ‘which kinds of visual images do you look at most?’. The children, aged 7, started to mention visual images from the built and family environment but I tried to guide them to discuss TV images. Luckily, I realised this in time so when children, aged 10-12, started to mention visual images from the built environment I tried not to interfere.

Listening to the tape records afterwards I realised that I needed to find a system to code sounds, pauses, contextual information, laughter, and emphatic, high rising and simultaneous, or interrupted speech in transcriptions. Reading Edwards & Lampert (1993) and Buckingham’s (1993) research reports helped me develop conventions for transcribing the interviews (Appendix 10). I also started thinking about categories and codes I needed to develop in order to describe and analyse interview data.

The decisions taken after the second pilot study were to:

- i. conduct the actual group discussions during the morning school programme (8.30-13.30) at the schools
- ii. organise six groups per school included in the research, one of children aged 6, one of children aged 7, two of children aged 8-9, and two of children aged 10-12
- iii. follow the same dissemination process and use the same structure and phrasing of questions during the actual group discussions

- iv. include the question ‘Have you learned anything from the visual images you see?’ to all age groups because some children may respond to it.

CHAPTER 3

GROUP INTERVIEWS WITH CHILDREN IN GREECE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the first part of the empirical research, group interviews with primary school children were conducted in order to determine the nature of their visual and aesthetic experiences and preferences for visual culture genres. They also sought to establish whether they understood the impact of visual culture on how they constructed knowledge about themselves and their worlds. This chapter discusses the context and implementation of the group interviews. Specifically, it outlines the research schedule, student population and their social background as the latter was a variable for analysing data. It also reports on children's behaviour during the interviews, individual characteristics and interpersonal influences. The second part of the chapter describes children's responses to the interview questions in the order I asked them in all groups. It includes selected verbatim quotes from the interview tapes to provide evidence of children's attitudes, preferences and views in an attempt to offer what Buckingham (1993) calls 'a reading of the children talk' and give an overview of what they said and how they expressed themselves.

3.2 RESEARCH CONTEXT

Twenty-four group interviews took place in four primary schools located in an urban, municipality of Athens, and a rural district of Greece, called North Ileia, between 30 January and 10 February 2006 (Appendix 11).

3.2.1 Schools

As noted in the previous chapter, an attempt was made to find a sample of schools with a balance of geographic locations and pupils from different ethnic and social class backgrounds. Using information provided by the headteachers in meetings before interviews, they can briefly be characterised as follows. School A in North Ileia district was one of the three primary schools in a small town of 7,000 people. The majority of the 115 students were of Greek origin (99%) and came from middle class families (65%). School B, in the same district, was located in a village of 1600 people. It had 70 students, 18 percent of whom were immigrants from Albania and Bulgaria. According to the headteacher, these students came from working class families with low educational attainment. The two other schools, C and D, were situated near Athens city centre. There were 120 children in school C. According to the school records, 40% of them were first or second generation immigrants. The majority (60%) were middle class. Finally, school D had 185 students, 75 percent of whom were immigrants. The majority were described by the school teachers as working class (77%). Both C and D schools were ethnically diverse with a comparatively higher proportion of Albanian children (70%) than any other group.

I interviewed a total of a hundred and forty-three children, aged between 6 and 12, in mixed-sex groups of six. According to Stewart & Shamdasani (1990) demographic factors such as age, gender, socio-economic status, ethnicity, race, religion, and educational level all influence group dynamics and/or the outcomes of group interviews. for the purposes of the analysis I designated children in terms of the two broad categories ‘middle’ and ‘working’ class according to parental occupational status. Parents’ educational level was difficult to determine, as the schools did not keep complete records of students. It was not possible therefore to establish if there were any cases where socio-economic status contradicted with educational attainment. Regarding ethnicity, children who attended schools A, B, C, and D were from Albania, Bulgaria, Poland, the former Soviet Union Romania, Africa and Greece (see Appendix 12). I decided therefore to assign children to these seven groups according to their origins. However, data analysis did not reveal any significant differences in responses given by children of different social class group, and ethnicity.

3.2.2 Art Education in the Selected Schools

Although all schools in Greece follow the same national curriculum and organise school time in the same way, teachers' attitudes towards and practices in art education probably differ. This probably affects student learning and their experiences of art. I considered it important, therefore, to ask headteachers and all teachers in the selected schools about the status of art education in their schools and how they taught it. This happened informally during my preliminary visits to the schools. The majority of teachers in school A, B and C told me they asked children to illustrate topics related to language or history lessons or colour-in sheets. The headteacher at school B also admitted that although children engaged in interdisciplinary, cross-thematic learning activities, visual art was neglected and teachers emphasised theatre education. Half the teachers in school D said they organised project work on selected topics like environment and health but also concentrated on two-dimensional practical work such as drawing, painting, construction with paper and wood and collage. This was the only school where two or three teachers organised exhibitions of student work. According to them, they did not teach art appreciation, art criticism, or art history. Only one teacher at school C said she occasionally taught art history to her students, which she linked to museum visits and history or language lessons. Regarding museum and galleries visits, teachers in schools C and D in Athens planned two or three visits per year that supplemented history, language and religion lessons. Headteachers in schools A and B in North Ileia district mentioned that they only planned one museum visit per year because of the distance.

3.2.3 Material Environment

The group interviews lasted 35-45 minutes each and were conducted outside the children's classrooms but inside the schools. Small rooms utilised by teachers as offices or storage rooms were secured for this purpose. I noted down that room sizes, decoration, and lack of privacy affected the children's attention and distracted some of them from the task at hand. For example, while a group of children in school A were talking about the visual images they discussed with their friends, Phil, an 8 ½-year-old boy, started to ask about scenery that was stored in the room. Also six-year-old boys and girls in school D examined with some curiosity the teachers' office where the interview took place and I had to ask them twice to concentrate in order to begin the interview.

3.2.4 Interview Schedule

Regarding the interview schedule, I asked all groups the same initial questions in the same order. In cases where children did not understand or listen to a question, I repeated it changing the wording but trying not to change the meaning.

- Researcher: Well, could you tell me now which kind of visual images you look at most frequently in your everyday life? [They seem to be confused]. These were visual [pointing to the pack with the visual tool] images that people look at in their everyday lives, right? Which ones do you look most often?
- Leon (9 years): I don't completely understand what you mean by that.
- Researcher: We look at visual images, don't we?
- Giorgos (8 years): My sister's face [general laughter]
- Researcher: Apart from this [general laughter]. If you think that our life is saturated by visual images, which of them do we look at most often? What do you see most often?

Prompts and follow-ups were also used to help children give specific, detailed answers and open up discussion between group members. However, their contributions to discussion were rather brief, especially in the beginning. They appeared to expect me to pose questions and they did not volunteer information about, for example, the visual images they preferred to look at in everyday life, or their favourite heroes and heroines.

3.2.5 Children's Attitudes towards Interviews

The decision to use group interviews was based on the premise that these are less threatening for young children than individual ones. I tried to create an informal atmosphere at the start by seating them in semi-circles in the hope that this would increase participation and relax them so they felt free to express their opinions. Although the majority of children did not hesitate before answering questions, approximately eight children from different groups seemed shy and remained silent most of the time during the discussion. Few children seemed intimidated by the interviews or the fact that the discussion was tape-recorded. Although I introduced myself at the beginning of each session and explained what I was doing and why the discussion was tape-recorded, in several cases children asked me to repeat this either because they did not understand in the first place or wanted re-

confirmation. They also asked to hear the tapes played back and were eager to listen to their own voices.

Researcher: [While we were finishing the discussion.] Do you want to say anything else about the visual images we see around us?
Mirto (9 years): No, I do not want to. But I want to ask you a question.
Researcher: Please, ask whatever you want.
Mirto: Why are you doing this research?
Researcher: I told you it is about the visual images children look at. [She is staring at me unconvinced].
Mirto: I do not completely understand it. & Why are you doing it?
Researcher: In order to complete my assignment and become= because, err! I am studying at a university and I need to do an assignment to take my degree. Is it clear now to you?
Mirto: I understand.

Researcher: Err! Do you want to ask anything else about what we've just done?
Akis (12 years): Why did we do that?
Researcher: I told you in the beginning. Because I am studying, and I have an assignment. And for completing this assignment I need to research=[
Tasos (11 years): [That is why you need the tape recorder?
Researcher: Yes, because I have asked many children already. You are not the only ones.
Sandra (12 years): We know that.

At the beginning of each session, I asked children to introduce themselves and I wrote down their names on a piece of paper. I explained that this would help me remember them during the interviews but promised confidentiality and anonymity. I also asked them to speak one by one and be quiet when a classmate spoke so that I could make sense of what they said when playing back the tapes. However, in two cases when interviewing groups of children aged 6 at schools A and B, I lost control because they started to misbehave and talk to each other. During one interview all the children in 6-year-old group at school A talked at once, moved out of their seats, and two boys kicked each other. When I talked about this to the classroom teacher and headteacher after the session, I was informed that this year had major discipline problems and all children misbehaved. In the 6-year-old group at school B two boys caused a lot of disruption. Panteli did not respond to any of the questions and talked to other children, and Nikolas shouted out and repeated whatever other children said. The

classroom teacher told me that Nikolas had health problems and his medication made him nervous but could not explain Panteli's behaviour.

The majority of children did not appear to perceive the interviews as lessons. Children in four groups in schools A, B and C asked me to stay 'a little more' or 'for one more hour' so that they could miss history, environmental studies (*Emeis ki o Kosmos*) and religion. Only one boy Georgios, aged 7 ½ appeared stressed; he told me he missed lessons and wanted to go back to class. In contrast, the young children aged 6-10 in school D appeared excited after the interviews and their teachers asked me at break-time what we had talked about. When these children met me the following day, they asked me to 'come into the classroom and do it again'.

3.2.6 Group Dynamics

According to Stewart & Shamdasani (1990), differences in individual characteristics influence group cohesiveness, compatibility, conformity, leadership, and/or interpersonal conflict and consequently determine groups' behaviour and performance. Energetic children like Velissarios aged 7 ½, Dimitri, aged 10, and Nansy, aged 11, Mario, aged 12, Leon, aged 9, and George, aged 8, and Chrysie, aged 9 ½, dominated their groups and influenced other group members' behaviour and so the groups were more involved and enthusiastic. Boys and girls who were not confident or self-reliant (like Esmeralda, Jesika, Fotini, Philip and Ioannis, aged 6, Irene and Martina, aged 8, Dorina, Tomi and Radovan, aged 9/10) did not respond immediately or left the floor open to group members with stronger views with whom they agreed.

Boys and girls in some groups were more socialable than in others and interacted better. This influenced the level of rapport and participation in the discussion. Moreover, boys and girls in the 6 and 11/12-year-old groups at school D and in 11/12-year-old group at school C appeared to be more mature than others of the same age and this influenced the level of contribution to the discussion. A few children like Akis, aged 12, Ilias, aged 10, Christina, aged 8, and Maxim, aged 9, kept their feelings and thoughts to themselves. The fact that it was a stranger who asked questions may have influenced their behaviour. It may also have

influenced by other members of their group who appeared sceptical and reserved. Finally, pre-existing social relationships between group members came into play. On the one hand, this contributed to the creation of a relaxing atmosphere, on the other it predisposed them to respond favourably to each other's comments or make jokes about classmates and friends. Gender differences were also evident in interpersonal interactions between member groups. For example, boys in the 10/12-year-old group at school D showed no interest in the discussion and talked to each other when girls mentioned fashion trends in magazines. Giorgos aged 8 even appeared to be annoyed when the girls in his group started to talk about *Barbie*. He made it clear that he knew who *Barbie* was because his sister played with her all the time but this got on his nerves.

3.3 IDENTIFICATION OF VISUAL CULTURE GENRES

At the beginning of each discussion the group were shown all 72 visual images included in the research tool organised in genres. Whereas the children were familiar with the images in majority of the genres, they could not name seven of them, such as crafts and street graffiti, the Web, fashion shows, book illustration, advertisements, and fine arts. During this task, it became clear that the children's attention was concentrated on the subject matter of the images rather than on the visual genre per se. The first thing the majority of the children did was to talk about the people or objects they depicted. Consequently, I asked them to try to name the kinds of images in one word. They were not familiar with the specialist terminology used in art education such as 'fine arts', 'book illustration', 'crafts', and 'graffiti'. Instead, they used words like 'paintings' or 'sculpture' for 'fine arts' or described 'book illustration' as 'pictures in books'.

Because they were downloaded from the Internet, the quality of the images included in the visual tool varied. This may have influenced children's responses to some of them. For example, they had difficulty naming 'advertisements' and could not explain the materials used in the images of the crafts. Also the fact that the tool included some images from well-known TV programmes (e.g. *Rebelde Way* and *Big Brother*), buildings (e.g. Parthenon and the *Olympic Athletic Centre*) and paintings (e.g. *Mona Lisa* and *Guernica*) probably influenced children to talk about them and open up discussion. It was their familiarity with

these images that probably relaxed the children and enabled them refer to personal experiences as to where and when they had seen them.

The tool included visual images of the logos of the TV shows *Big Brother* and *Fame Story Live* (Appendix 15). It also included an image depicting the main characters of the Argentinean telenovela *Anipotaktes Kardies (Rebelde Way)* and visual images from comics and animated cartoons like the *SpongeBob Squarepants*, *Mickey Mouse*, *Duffy Duck*, *The Strumfs*, *Popeye* and *Asterix and Obelix*. Children in all groups recognised the subject matter of these images and appeared excited as they talked about them. They also correctly identified the particular visual culture genres of ‘TV programmes’ and ‘animated cartoons’ after my request to name them with one word.

Mario (12 years):	<i>Anipotaktes Kardies (Rebelde Way)</i> .
All:	[Enthusiastically] <i>Rebelde Way!! Fame Story!!</i>
Researcher:	OK! You know about them. But do not shout all together.
Velissarios (7 ½ years):	It’s <i>Duffy Duck</i> ! [Enthusiastically]
All:	(?) <i>Mickey Mouse, Duffy Duck!!</i>
Mathew (7 years):	It’s <i>Popeye</i> !!
Researcher:	What word can you use to call all these?
Gena (7 ½ years):	Programmes for children.
Nicos: (7 ½ years)	Animated cartoons.
Velissarios:	Cartoons.

When they were shown the snapshots of the football match and Olympic Games, the children recognised and named this genre as ‘athletic events’ and stated that people can watch them on TV or live at stadiums. Most of the boys also identified the name of the football player.

All:	(?) (This is) from the Olympic Games.
Dimitri (10-years):	This is football.
Mikis, Savvas:	This is <i>Toure</i> (football player of Greek team)!

The images of *Barbie*, *Ninja Turtles*, and *Play Mobil* were recognised quickly and were classified as ‘toys’.

Jenny (6 years):	It is <i>Barbie</i> !!
Researcher:	Yes. And what is this? [The boys raise their hands.] Do boys know about it?

Julian (6 years): [Enthusiastically] (?) Miss, Miss! [He is shaking his hand towards my face]
 Researcher: Calm down, please, and be careful. Come on, tell us Julian.
 Julian: (?) *Ninja Turtles*!!

When the children were shown two examples of family photographs, they immediately recognised and named them as a sub-genre of photographs. They also mentioned the function for this genre and appeared to understand that people take such photographs to remember special events and keep them as memoirs.

All: (?) Photographs!!
 Researcher: Do you have photographs in your homes?
 Voices: Yes. We have a lot.
 Researcher: Could you tell me a reason for taking photographs and keeping them at home? Yes? Rubby?
 Rubby (12 years): To remember all the things we have done, for example, the summer. As a memoir, when we went to the seaside.

The tool included two visual images of carnival they all identified correctly at once. Because the interviews took place fifteen days before carnival the majority of children talked about the costumes they planned to wear at the school party, or ones they wore the previous year.

Ismini (9 years): This is carnival.
 Researcher: Yes, it is. Do you dress up during the carnival?
 All: (?) YES!!!
 Researcher: Who will tell me about the costume that wore last year, or the one he/she will wear this year? [The children raise their hands].
 Come on Sarah.
 Sarah (10 years): I have dressed up as the *Snow Queen* many times.
 Researcher: Can you tell us the reason?
 Sarah: Err! I like snow very much and I want to wear a white costume.
 Researcher: Have you seen this costume anywhere else?
 Sarah: Err! In *Snow Queen* (Andersen's fairy tale). I have her, I have a small book that has been torn out from another big one. And I have seen her in a movie. I like her.
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 :
 Giorgos (8 years): Me? Last year? I dressed up as *Spiderman*.
 Researcher: Can you tell us why?
 Giorgos: Err! I like his costume.
 Researcher: Err! Where did you see this costume?
 Leon (9 years): What is *Spiderman*? What do you know about him?
 Giorgos: I saw him on the telly, but I also saw him in a magazine that had several costumes and I liked him.

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- Leon: Last year I dressed up as *Action Man*. I saw that on the telly and I liked it because it had action. He does tricks and things like that.
- Researcher: Did you do the same when you dressed up like him?
- Leon: Err! I can't. I'm not the *Action Man*!
- Researcher: OK! Dimitri?
- Dimitri (8 years): I dressed up like a cowboy.
- Researcher: Did you see this anywhere?
- Dimitri: Basically, I didn't see it anywhere. My dad chose the costume for me. I didn't go with him. Err!

When they were shown the images of parades/street marches they all successfully identified them and talked about their participating in them.

- Christopher (10 years): Here is a street march.
- Researcher: Have you ever participated in a street march?
- Yugin (8 ½ years): We all have taken part.
- Researcher: Do you know the reason you do that?
- Yugin: Err! Miss! & When it was 28 October the older children from year six participated in the street march, err! and we watched them.
- Researcher: Where else can you watch a street march?
- Mohamed (10 ½ years): Here (at school).
- Yugin: And in *Omonia* (One of Athens's central squares).

The majority of children were able to identify the images from magazines and newspapers in the tool as such and talked about other examples of this genre they liked to read.

- All: (?) Magazines!
- Researcher: Which one of you reads magazines? [They all raise their hands.] All of you? Mirto?
- Mirto (9 years): I read *Psychologia* and *Vita*, my mum buys them. & I buy *Mickey Mouse*.
- Elpida (8 years): Sometimes I buy=, my mum buys for me several books that are from Disney and *Barbie* (*Barbie* magazine)
- Dora (10 years): Err! *Bugs Bunny* and all the others with the princesses (she means the princesses from the *Barbie* movies).
- Dimitra (8 years): I read magazines that are about *Mickey Mouse*, *Bugs Bunny* and *Barbie*.
- Alekos (8 years) I read (the one) with *Donald Duck*.

When the children saw the still images from the films *Harry Potter*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and *Star Wars* they became very excited and shouted out. They correctly named the film titles and characters and were familiar with the stories of *Harry Potter* and *The Lord of the Rings*, but not *Star Wars*. They also told me they watched movies at the cinema and on TV and DVDs.

Researcher: [Showing visual images from *Harry Potter*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and *The Star Wars*] Can you tell me something about these?

All: [They get up their chairs and yell.] (?) *Harry Potter!! Harry Potter!!* And the *Lord of the Rings!!*

Researcher: What a noise!

Georgie (7½ years): (?) It's *Harry Potter* and the *Lord of the Rings*!

Researcher: Have you seen them Georgie? [

(?): [(?) Me too! [

Georgios (7½ years): [(?) Me too!

Researcher: OK.

Ioannis (7½ years): I have seen them, Miss! & I have seen them on TV and our dad has taken movies for us to see.

Georgios: I also have movies & I have seen them on DVD.

Irina (10½ years): *This is a film* & It is called *Harry Potter*.

Researcher: Do you know who *Harry Potter* is? Vicky? What is *Harry Potter*?

Mohamed (10½ years): Shall I say?

Vicky (8 years): He is a magician. & I've heard that he sometimes makes chocolate. It is a chocolate factory.

Yougin (8½ years): No!

Researcher: Is this another film?

Yougin: There is no such film!

Mohamed: (*Harry Potter*) He is a child. An old man came to take him and they went to a school for magicians and they put a hat on his head and if the hat agreed to stay at the school and if it not agreed he went outside. And now he became a magician and he had=, and they did a race with brooms. And whoever wins will take the small ball, he will be the winn= /, his team will be the winner.

All of them were familiar with images from theatre, ballet, Greek traditional dances, shadow theatre performances and pop concerts, and the majority could name these genres. It was apparent that the majority had personal experience of watching theatre or *Karagiozis* performances at school or with parents. A few said they took traditional Greek dance or

ballet classes or had watched siblings or friends' performances, or ballet on TV. Finally, some of them said they watched live concerts of favourite singers with parents and friends.

Joanna (6 years): [Excited] Ah! Miss! Ballet!!
Researcher: Have you ever watched ballet?
Joanna: Yes! & In a theatre where was, what was her name? Raphaela's sister. She is in the nursery and her sister played at the theatre.
Researcher: Yes. And you? Have you ever watched ballet?
Jenny (6 years): I have watched along with Joanna because we go together to ballet (taking ballet classes).
Researcher: What about you?
Nikon (7 years): Yes, on the TV.
Researcher: What about theatre? Have you watched any?
All: Yes! Of course!
Researcher: Where?
All: Here! Here!
Researcher: What do you mean?
Nikon: Here at our school. We went to a theatre performance.

The images of buildings in the tool included an ancient temple, a Byzantine church, a neoclassical building, a contemporary block of flats and a stadium. All the children correctly identified each building though they did not use art historical terms 'neoclassical', 'contemporary' and 'Byzantine'. When I asked them to describe them all in one word, they classified them as 'buildings' and did not apply the terms 'architecture' or 'urban design'.

Yugin (8 ½ years): It's the Acropolis!
Mohamed (10 ½ years): Acropolis and Parthenon? Is it Parthenon?
Researcher: Yes, Mohamed. Yugin?
Yugin: Buildings and a church.

They almost all recognised images of *Action Man* and *Power Rangers* and named this genre as 'games for Play Station'. They told me they played with play-station and computer games at home, and/or had experienced playing with them at friends or relatives' houses.

Georgia (10 ½ years): This is a game for play-station.
Researcher: Do you have play-station at home?
Georgia: Not me. One of my brother's friends had one and we often go and play.
Researcher: Do any of you have a play-station?
Mary (11 years): My brother has one.
Christen (11 years): We used to have one.

The visual tool included two reproductions of religious icons. The vast majority of children identified this particular visual culture genre quite quickly stating that people use these kinds of images for prayer and protection.

All:	Jesus' icons!
Researcher:	Where do we see such kinds of icons?
Fotini (11 years):	In the church.
Christiana (11 years):	In temples.
Elvis (12 years):	At museums.
Anastasia (10 ½ years):	At our homes. & In <i>ekonostasi</i> (a special place for icons).

When the children saw the images of craft objects (decorative wooden spoons, ceramic plates and vases, and an embroidered rug) almost all of them concentrated their attention on their function and named them as 'dishes' 'vessels' 'pots', 'ladles made from wood', 'ancient ladles', 'a rug made on a loom', and 'small rug'. None of them used the word 'craft'. Two students Demis and Roudina, aged 11 ½, used the noun 'pottery' for the ceramic plates and vases and 'wood-carving' for the decorative wooden spoons. The majority of younger children concentrated on the materials the crafts were made of but appeared troubled and uncertain about them, probably because the printed images were not very clear. However, when they were asked why people make such things they described them correctly as products that are used for utilitarian or decorative purposes.

Zac (7 ½ years):	Vases.
Researcher:	What are they made of?
Zac:	From glass.
Andros (7 ½ years):	From clay?
Researcher:	From clay. And these?
Anna (7 years):	Ah! They are from gold. Gold= [general laughter] /
Johnny (7 ½ years):	Spoons made of clay. Or, may be made of wood?

Researcher:	Why do people make such things?
Vasili (10 years):	Because they are = /we can use them.
Maxim (9 years):	Miss! Miss! & For beauty (He means that people use them in order to decorate and beautify their houses).
Vasili:	As souvenirs.
Mina (9 years):	For decoration.

A few children thought these objects were made in ancient years. Nine-year-old Leon, for example, was certain that wooden and ceramic objects were made by 'ancient people'. According to him 'there was no plastic in ancient times to make things like the ones we

make nowadays, that is why they used them [the materials] from nature'. Other children commented that people can find such kinds of objects in folklore art museums.

All: Rugs!!
Kostas (8 years): Miss, can I say where we can find them?
Researcher: Go on Kostas.
Kostas: In folklore museum. In folklore art museum.

The literature on mass media culture suggests that children are familiar with advertisements on TV and in magazines Vryzas (1997). However, these children could not immediately name the reproductions in the tool of *Elvive* shampoo, *Adidas* shoes, *Coca cola* soft drink, *Eau de Merveilles* perfume, and *Siemens* mobile phone as 'advertisements'. Instead, they named the products being advertised or stated that the images came from magazines. They did not use the term 'advertisement' until they were asked specifically what kind of images they were, or reasons they were published in magazines. It may be the case that they were confused by the fact that the particular images in the tool were not good quality.

Hara (11 years): These are from magazines.
Researcher: Yes. But what are they?
Nicoleta (11 years): Conditioner and shampoo.
Researcher: Yes?
Nicoleta: Advertisements?

Jonela (6 ½ years): They are from magazines.
Researcher: Well done, Jonela. What=? Why do people put them inside the magazines?
Andrew: They read them.
Researcher: Who reads them, Andrew?
Andrew (6 years): The people.
All: The people.
Researcher: And what do they do after they read them?
Mario (6 years): They go and buy them (the products).

The majority of boys and girls identified the two images of shopping malls as 'shops', or 'shopping centres' where 'people go and buy things'. Very few recognised it as an image of *The Mall*, which is a big shopping centre in Athens. Almost all of them told me they had visited shopping malls to purchase goods and for entertainment. The majority of urban children also were able to name the theme park in a third image as *Allou Fun Park*, a big fun

park in Athens, but the majority of those attending rural schools said it was a 'place for children' ('paidotopos').

Roula (11 years): Is it like a shopping centre?
Researcher: Yes, Roula. Have you ever been in a shopping centre?
Thea (10 ½ years): In a shopping centre there are lots of stores where you can buy clothes, shoes and you spend your time till you buy things.

The visual tool included seven well-known Western masterpieces of fine art. Almost all the children identified the Cycladic marble figurine, the grave stele of Hegeso, and the section of the Parthenon frieze as 'sculptures'. The majority also identified Da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*, Picasso's *Guernica*, Van Gogh's *Sunflowers*, and Gyzis' *Koukou* correctly as 'paintings'. From the discussion, it appeared that the vast majority of children were familiar with the sculptures and knew where people could see them. They appeared to equate 'sculptures' with 'statues' as they used the later to describe the products and the process of making them. This is probably because they said they had visited Greek museums and had seen images of ancient Greek statues in textbooks. Some also mentioned that they had seen statues in public squares.

Efie (11 years): These are some representations & err! with Poseidon and Hermes?
Researcher: Probably yes.
Savvas (11 years): They are in a museum mainly in the place they were found.
Researcher: Yes, Savva. Have you ever visited a museum?
All: (?) Yes!!
Nansy (11 years): With our school.

When children were shown the images of *Mona Lisa*, *Guernica*, *Sunflowers*, and *Koukou* they started to name the titles of those they recognised. Most children correctly identified Da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* and told me they had seen this painting reproduced in a chocolate advertisement (*Gioconda Pavlides*), Disney cartoons called *Timon and Bumpa*, and a TV series called *Sto Para Pente*. A few children aged 10-12 recognised and could name Picasso's *Guernica*, but none of them could name the paintings by Van Gogh and Gyzis.

Fanis (7 years): This is *Mona Lisa*. & I have seen it in a programme for children.
Researcher: Which one?
Fanis: Err! *Timon and Bumpa*. They were in a museum and it broke while they were flying and they fell on a painting that was exactly like this one.

Researcher: [To a child who is raising his hand.] Have you seen it anywhere else?
 Mathew (7 years): Miss! It is on the chocolates we eat.

The children's ability to name the artists varied by age. Although, Theodor, Nikolas, and Ann aged 6 could not say who makes paintings, two boys of the same age, Kostis and Lino used the noun 'artist'. Dea and Jonela, aged 6, invented a novel word for 'painter', which does not translate in English ('ο πινακάς') and means 'the man who makes the panel'. Most children used the word 'a painter' but could not name specific examples. Only a few knew that Da Vinci painted *Mona Lisa* and Picasso painted *Guernica*. Some children knew *Guernica* was a city in Spain that was bombed and explained this was because they watched *Sto Para Pente*, a Greek TV series. Ahmed, Dora, Ilias, and Mirto, aged 8-9, all said they had learned about *Guernica* and Picasso at school. However, they could not remember, or appeared to be confused, about the subject matter. For example, 9-year-old Ahmed said that 'where Picasso lived there was a war, and he was upset, and then he went to his place and painted it'. In a few cases, children were recalling information their teachers had pointed about these artworks. This was confirmed by Ahmed's teacher later in an informal discussion during break time.

All: Paintings!!
 Helen (11 years): [She is pointing at *Guernica*] Ah! Yes, it's in *Sto Para Pente*.
 Researcher: Let's talk about it then.
 Irin (11 years): Err! This was made by:: Picasso::
 Researcher: Yes. How do you know about that?
 Irin: From *Sto Para Pente*. *Theopoula* (one of the heroines) pretended that she made it.
 Researcher: I see!
 ?: Oh! Yes, yes!
 Researcher: Do you know what this painting is about?
 Irin: It is not *Livadia* (a city in Greece) that *Theopoula* said it was.
 [general laughter]
 Helen: It is a city in Spain.
 Irin: Oh, yes! It's *Guernica*.
 Researcher: Exactly! Do you recognize anything else? Come on Marian.
 Marian (11 years): [She is laughing] This is *Gioconda*.
 Irin: *Mona Lisa*!
 Researcher: Yes. How do you know *Gioconda*?
 Marian: Err! It is one of those paintings Picasso made. & Err! Da Vinci.
 Researcher: Yes. Have you seen it before?
 Helen: On chocolates.

Demis (12 years):	We have a big poster of <i>Gioconda</i> in our English school.
Marian:	I have seen it in a shop that has a poster hanging on the wall.
Lampis (11 years):	In <i>Anthologio</i> (one of their school textbooks). It has a big picture of her and it seems strange to me and wherever you look at it you think she looks at you. That's all.

When the children were shown images of covers of children's fairy tales, fiction and textbooks as examples of graphic design, the majority recognised them as 'books' or 'images from books'. Since no one used the term 'illustration' or 'graphic design', it is not clear whether they were aware of this classification. Their talk revealed that they were aware of commercial, aesthetic and didactic functions of book illustration however. Most children across groups explained that the books included visual images so that 'young children buy and read them' and because 'books look more beautiful with images'. They suggested that images in books 'help us to understand what the book says' and 'learn new things that we don't know'. They also noted that books with visual images are aesthetically more 'pleasing', 'beautiful', 'cheering' and 'alive'.

The tool included two visual images of street graffiti which the majority of children identified as either 'graffiti', 'wall-paintings', or 'paintings on a wall that older children have made'. Half of the children aged 6-7 in three different groups said they had seen them before in a TV programme but could not name them as 'street graffiti'.

Andy (8 years):	<i>Leonidas</i> (the name of the hero of the TV comedy <i>10 Lepta Kirigma</i>).
Researcher:	What?
Andy:	It is <i>Leonidas</i> . It's <i>Leonidas</i> in the paintings.
Researcher:	Who is <i>Leonidas</i> ?
Andy:	Err! On TV! They do that on TV, I have seen it.
Irene (8 years):	I have seen it as well.
Nikos (7 years):	Me too! On TV!

When the children were shown the two visual images of fashion shows, the majority of those aged 6-7 appeared to find it difficult to classify this as a visual culture genre. They suggested that the women in the images were 'dancers' or 'singers'. After I told them this was not the case, they said they 'do fashion', 'walk and show their clothes' and 'dress up and go out so that people can see them'. However, the majority of children aged 8-12 did use words like 'models', 'modelling', 'fashion shows', 'fashion', and 'catwalk'. Some of them appeared to

be aware of the commercial function of fashion shows. For, example, Dimitri, aged 10, said that models ‘advertise clothes’ and Nastasia, aged 8, said that they ‘show us the clothes and we purchase them afterwards’. A few mentioned that they had seen fashion shows on TV and films.

Sarah (10 years):	Models!
Researcher:	Yes.
Sarah:	I have seen them in a Greek film & with <i>Vlahopoulou!</i> (an actress).

The last three images shown to the children were examples of WebPages from *Google* search engine, *The Weather Channel’s* site and the American CNN’s site. Although the majority of them understood they were computer generated, only a few could name them as ‘WebPages’ or ‘pages from the Internet’. This is not surprising given the low use of Internet and Word Wide Web by children aged 6-12 in Greece (Kourti, 2002; Panagyotopoulou, 2001; Bari Focus, 2006).

3.4 IMAGES CHILDREN LOOKED AT MOST

One aim of this study was to find out what kinds of visual culture genres children in Greece viewed most frequently everyday. After they had viewed all the visual images in the tool, I asked them which ones they looked at most often. The children’s responses were straightforward and short, and it was difficult to tell whether or how much they were influenced by the choice of images and the way they were presented.

Some children, the majority of which were from Athens, said they looked at the built environment and mentioned buildings, monuments, stadiums, roads, etc. They did not use the words ‘architecture’ or ‘urban design’ and appeared to be talking about buildings they viewed every day in their neighbourhoods as they walked to and from school.

Researcher:	...What kinds of images do you see most often?
Christos (9 years):	Blocks of flats and stores.
Researcher:	Yes?
Christos:	Blocks of flats and stores, factories, houses, cars::, tracks.
Researcher:	Yes. Sebastian?
Sebastian (9 ½ years):	The same as Christos.
Researcher:	You Angelica?
Angelica (8 ½ years):	Err! Motorbikes, houses, /

- Annieza (7 years): I see *Galaxias* (a supermarket) there [she points outside opposite the school]. Near my home there is one [she means a restaurant] that people buy souvlakia (a kind of Greek food) with meat mince [
- Andros (7 ½ years): [*Souvlatzidiko* (the Greek name for this kind of restaurants).
- Annieza: & Err! Err! A park, cars, err, shops that sell computers and books. Err! That's all.

Some children, aged 6-7, mentioned viewing visual images of cartoons on television. They used the words 'cartoons', 'comics', 'mickey mouse' and 'dolls', and mentioned the names of particular comics and animated cartoons. The following quotations are examples of how they talked about this particular genre. Because all of them used the verb 'βλέπω' (vlepo), which means to see, watch, and look, the English verb 'see' is used in the following extracts instead of 'watch'.

- Andrew (6 years): I see the dolls on TV. I also have DVD, and I see them all.
- Dea (6 years): I see the *Magic Pegasus*, some other *Barbies* and I see *SpongeBob Squarepants* and *Bugs Bunny*. & And the small and big animals.
- Alex (6 years): Miss, I see *Mickey Mouse*. I see it at night. I see it at seven o'clock. And [I see] *Ninja Turtles* in the morning.
- Phanis (7 years): I see mickey mouse on TV (he means cartoons in general, not the Walt Disney's *Mickey Mouse*).
- Phil (8 years): Err! [I see] Comics. *Asterix and Obelix*. & In magazines.
- Tomy (9 years): I see mickey mouse every Saturday and every Sunday. [I see] *Pokémon*, *Yu-Gi-Oh*, many.
- Yiota (11 years): At the weekend I see *Strumfs*, I see *Ninja Turtles*, I see *Pokémon*, many.

Children, who lived in the rural district, said they looked at TV images most. They did not use the general classification 'TV programmes' but named sitcoms, social dramas and soap operas for adults. They made it clear that they watched them in the afternoons and evenings.

- Tasos (11 years): I see (watch) *Icones* with Taso Doussi on *Alfa* (Greek channel). [He repeats in order to make clear that I understood] I see the TV programme *Icones* with Taso Doussi on *Alfa*.

Maxim (9 years):	I see <i>Sto Para Pente</i> . At night.
Mina (9 years):	<i>Vera sto Dexi</i> , and if it is I see the News:: as well. And I see <i>Sto Para Pente</i> .
Maria (9 years):	Err! <i>Kafe tis Haras</i> . & I see every Sunday, I see <i>Rapunzel</i> , I see a series every night, every Wednesday that is a new one.
Claudia (11 years):	I see some series every afternoon. & I have=, (they are) for grown people. My mum watches them and I like some of them.
Researcher:	For example?
Claudia:	We have=, we watch <i>Roxanne::</i> , <i>Valentina</i> [she laughs]. Err! It is in the afternoon when we come back (from school) <i>Cinderella</i> , namely <i>Flo</i> , and <i>Anipotaktes Kardies</i> . But I don't watch this often. But at four o'clock I think /.

A few boys and girls, from the rural district, answered that they viewed both TV programmes and comics/animated cartoons. They appeared to distinguish TV programmes made for children from those made for adults. A few like Efie, Mikis and Dimitri, aged between 10 and 12, named computer games and play stations imagery. Akis and Billy, aged 10-12, mentioned educational DVD's too. Yugin, Michael, and Savvas, aged between 8 and 11, said they frequently watched athletic events on TV, mainly football and car races. Maria and Christine, aged 11, Elpida, aged 8, and Zac, aged 7 ½, named family photographs taken on holidays and special events. A few children gave miscellaneous responses. Some of these said they frequently viewed visual imagery from more than one source including TV, religious icons, films, graffiti and the built environment; others referred to their own drawings, toys, films, clothes in window displays, posters in bedrooms, magazines and newspapers and visual images in cellular phones.

3.5 CHILDREN'S PREFERENCES FOR VISUAL IMAGES

The children's response to the question what visual culture genres they preferred differed significantly from the one about frequencies in that only one child mentioned the built environment. Perhaps 'real images' did not 'excite' these children in the same way as simulated ones, or they may be misinterpreted the question. In response to this question, the children mainly talked about the subject matter of the visual images they liked best.

The majority of boys and girls aged 6-10 told me they liked comics and animated cartoons best and mentioned *Ninja Turtles*, *SpongeBob Squarepants*, *Superman*, *Pokémon*, *Aristocats*, *Mickey Mouse* and *Donald Duck* as favourites among others. They told me they liked the humour in comics and animated cartoons and said things like: they ‘make us laugh’ or their characters are funny. Six-year-old Julian said: ‘Goofy is funny because his ears are big and touch his cheeks and he wears funny clothes’. Most of those children identified with comic heroes, like *Pikatsou*, *Minnie Mouse*, *Superman*, and *Barbie* personally and talked about things they do: ‘save people’, ‘have nice clothes’, ‘do stupid things’, ‘dance nicely’, and ‘run quickly’. Some girls aged between 6 and 10, who preferred animated TV programmes and comics, referred to Barbie movies including *Barbie and the Magic of Pegasus*, *Barbie in the Nutcracker*, and *Barbie as Rapunzel*.

On the other hand, the majority of older children aged 11-12 named favourite sitcoms like *10 Lepta Kirigma*; TV series like *Tha Vreis to Daskalo sou*, *To Kafe tis Haras*, and *Sto Para Pente*; telenovelas and soap operas like *Anipotaktes Kardies*, *Erotas (love) Extra Large*, *Vera sto Dexi*, and *Floricienta*; and game shows like *Deal* and *Fort Boyard*. These children explained why they found favourite TV programmes interesting and talked about the characters they liked most.

Cony and Efie, aged 11 ½, Mirto, aged 9, Dora, aged 10, and Theodor and Marinos, aged 6, told me they liked to look at the natural environment best, specifically at sunsets, the sky, flowers and trees. Dora said she liked it ‘when the sun goes down’, and Theodor liked ‘trees and pine-trees’. According to Csikszentmihalyi & Robinson (1990) and Beardsley (1982), humans invest attention in visual stimuli like natural and human-made objects because they get a sense of harmony, pleasure, and satisfaction from this and it enables them to forget everyday concerns. So, it is possible they found them aesthetically pleasing.

For a few children aged 10-12 athletic events were a favourite genre. They talked about watching on TV and engaging in athletic events like football, the Olympic Games and water polo. Dimitri and Giorgos, aged 8, said: ‘I like football, because I myself play football’. It is probable the Greek team’s achievements in football or basketball matches played some role

in shaping these children's preferences. At the time the research took place, Greek television was playing back scenes from the European football Cup 2004 and the Olympic Games of 2004 perhaps because are widely considered great national achievements (Dimou, 2004). This may explain why these children referred to both these events.

Leon (9 years): (I like) The Olympic games & Because it's very nice.

Akis (12 years): I like most from TV, when we won Euro in 2004, the Eurocup. I like to see the Eurocup, to see the goals we scored.

Vasilios, aged 10 ½, Andros, aged 7 ½, Irin, aged 11, and Nick, aged 10, named book illustrations and maps as their favourite kinds of imagery. Their explanation of why they liked book illustrations is consistent with Thibault's (2003) claim that book illustrations help children understand texts, make sense of books, and stimulate their imagination.

Nick (10 years): From books. & Because they are very nice, Miss. You read them.

Researcher: What do you mean?

Nick: You read, you understand what they say & It has beautiful images and[

Researcher: Can you tell me about an image from a book you liked most?

Nick: I like from / from Troy. & From Troy, that Ancient Greeks made war in Troy. There it has beautiful images. I like them.

Irin (11 years): Err! From books. & Err! Because they show something::, somebody paint them::, they are like alive::. I like them!

Four boys, Mario, Mikis Dimitri, aged between 10 and 12, and Jei aged 6, who said they liked automobiles best, viewed them 'in magazines', on 'TV programmes', and 'on the roads'. On the other hand, Demi, Ilias Athena and Elie, all aged between 8 and 10, named works of fine art and specifically nature paintings as a favourite kind of image.

Athena (8 ½ years): Err! I like most paintings that have beautiful landscapes, with trees, with animals, and, and, and [

Researcher: [The nature?

Athena: & And the nature. Err! I like the flowers, the flowers they have.

Four girls, Adele and Nicky, aged 7, Helen, aged 11, and Chrysie, aged 9 ½, said they liked the posters hanging on in their bedrooms best. They told me these depicted landscapes from places they had visited, or were portraits of celebrities they admired. Eleven year old Nancy and Savvas liked play station images best, while Roula and Artemis, aged 11, named family

photos as favourite images. Alexander, Christiana, Elvis, aged 10/12, and Cathy, aged 6, liked their own drawings best, while three girls, Elena and Christiana, aged 10 and 12, and Anna, aged 7, said they preferred ‘shop windows’ and ‘brand new clothes in shops’. Only Georgie, aged 7 ½, said he liked graffiti.

Finally, three 7-year-old children, who could not decide what visual images they preferred, said they liked everything they looked at.

Nicos (7 ½ years):	I like everything (I look at). I can’t decide if one is better than another and the other is worse.
Fanis (7 years):	I like everything as well.
Researcher:	But where do all these come from?
Fanis:	From TV and I like posters as well.
:	
:	
Gena (7 ½ years):	I like everything (I look at).

3.5.1 Reasons for Preferences

When I asked children to explain their preferences for looking at certain kinds of visual images, some of them struggled to find words to express their thoughts. Some used a single descriptive adjective only, especially ‘beautiful’ or ‘funny’, and others started to narrate scenes or plot lines from animated cartoons or TV programmes.

Claudia (11 years):	[Talking about <i>Cinderella</i> animated cartoon] Err! When she grew up=, she was born from ashes (? because a star) fell, that is why she was called <i>Cinderella</i> . My mum and my granny used to tell me this fairytale (when we were) in Albania. Err! I like it because her step-mother - the fairy tale has lot of evil and lot of benevolence as well- tells her to do all the work, they leave her alone, they tell her to cook, but a witch that day they will go the party= [
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Identification with characters emerged as one of the main explanations for children’s preferences for TV programmes and animated cartoons. Some children, the majority of whom were between 6 and 10 years old, explained that they liked specific programmes, cartoons or computer and console games best because of characters’ physical or mental attributes. Young girls, for example, liked *Barbie* movies because the ‘princesses dance, sing and have nice clothes’. Young boys, on the other hand, liked animated TV programmes with superheroes like *Superman* and *Spiderman* because they are ‘good’, ‘powerful’, ‘save

people', or do extraordinary things like 'jumping in the air' and 'stopping the bus with their power'.

- Velissarios (7 ½ years): I like the one (he means the film) with *King Kong*.
Researcher: Yes, Velissarios. But why do you like it?
Velissarios: Because *King Kong* climbs on towers. I have watched on television that he climbed on a tower and he caught an aeroplane and threw it away.
- Nansy (11 years): I like (visual images) from play station mostly. It has a game for girls and I like the heroine.
Researcher: What is it about this heroine?
Nansy: Err! She is beautiful. I like her because she is dynamic, she fights with dragons= [
Researcher: [Who is this heroine?
Nansy: I don't remember her name. & She is very good. I like her.
Researcher: What else is she doing?
Nansy: Err! What else/ She is like I told you. She faces dragons, looks for treasures, err! [she does] things like these.
- Mina (9 years): I watch a series in *Alter* (TV channel), it is called *Esmeralda*.
Researcher: Why do you like *Esmeralda*?
Mina: Because she was a young blind girl who managed to make a life.
Researcher: How did she manage that?
Mina: Err! Because blind women do not have affairs and things like that. And she lived a nice life.

Some boys and girls, mostly aged 10-12, used the adjectives 'beautiful' or 'nice' to describe window displays in shopping malls, TV programmes for children, artworks, and the natural environment. It was not clear if the word 'beautiful' signified aesthetic qualities of the visual images concerned, especially with the artworks or fashion images. Boys applied the same terms to images of athletic events, such as the Olympic Games, or used them because they could not find any other way of explaining a preference.

- Christina (11 years): I like to see [visual images from] windows outside shops. & They have image, nice clothes, nice things. They are beautiful as images to look at.
- Ilias (10 years): I like paintings and football. & Because they are beautiful. Artists make very beautiful paintings.
- Vaso (11 ½ years): [I like] *Tha Vreis to Daskalo Sou* (TV series).
Researcher: Can you tell me why?

Vaso: Err! Miss= & Err! It is nice. & Err! I like this.

Vasili (10 years): I like *Pokémon*. & Because they have beautiful things. & It is beautiful!

‘Fun’, ‘enjoyment’ or ‘amusement’ was another reason for liking visual images. Some children, mostly aged 10-12, mentioned the humorous content of comics and animated television series they liked using phrases such as ‘they make us laugh’, ‘they are amusing’. Watching TV programmes was described as ‘having fun’. A few children recognised the uniqueness/originality of the TV series *Sto Para Pente* and *Tha Vreis to Daskalo Sou* when they referred to them saying that ‘they are different, not like other TV series’.

Fotini (11 years): I like to watch cartoons. Err! *SpongeBob (Squarepants)*. & Because, my sister who is older than me is also stuck on it. & And I want to watch it all the time

Researcher: Is it something particular about *SpongeBob*?

Fotini: It is great fun. They do sometimes, err! How do you call it? Some silly things I could say. Err! That’s all.

Sandra (12 years): *Sto Para Pente*.

Researcher: Come on tell me.

Sandra: Err! I watch it, I watch it every Monday at 10.30 on *Mega* (TV Channel); and I watch it because I like it, it is fun, and it is different, it isn’t like all the other (TV series) that are ordinary.

Phil (8 ½ years): *Asterix and Obelix*, *Mickey Mouse* on ERT (TV channel) and in magazines.

Researcher: Why do you like these?

Phil: Because I like them! / Because they are funny and not frightening.

The visual narrative qualities of ‘action’ and ‘adventure’ were stated as reasons also for liking certain TV programmes and animated cartoons. Children across the groups used the nouns ‘suspense’, ‘action’ and ‘adventure’ to explain preferences. Four boys aged between 7 and 10 also physically demonstrated to me how *Ninja Turtles* fight with their swords, and how the *Smack Down* stars wrestle and break chairs and tables.

Nondas (9 years): Err! (I like visual images) From TV. I have also and fairytales. I read sometimes.

Research: But I asked you which visual images you like most.

Nondas: / I like the things I read, a book. But it is not. It’s a comic book. & Because it has adventure. They win::

A few children across groups could not give precise reasons for preferences for TV programmes, cartoons, football or artworks. They simply repeated the phrase ‘because I like it’. Either they were uncertain about how to justify them, or they could not find the right words to express their thoughts.

Panteli (6 years): (I like) *To Kafe tis Haras* (TV comedy).
 Researcher: Why do you like *To Kafe tis Haras*?
 Panteli: I don’t know.
 Researcher: But you watch it. Why do you watch it?
 Panteli: Because I like it.

Tiny (6 years): (I like) *Mickey*, and *101 Dalmatian dogs*.
 Researcher: Yes! Why do you like them most?
 Tiny: Because:: Because I like them. Because /

A few others were clear that they liked visual images from television programmes and animated cartoons because of the narratives. Christine, aged 11, explained that her favourite TV programmes *To Kafe tis Haras* and *10 Lepta Kirigma* ‘have nice stories’. Others narrated the plot line of TV series or animated cartoons, such as *Cinderella*, and *Tha Vreis to Daskalo Sou*, as a way of explaining why they were appealing.

Cony (11 years): [Talking about TV series *Tha Vreis to Daskalo Sou*]. Because there is a teacher with a young gir=, with one of his / students, anyway, and OK, they will have an affair at the end. & Err! And till then it shows their little adventures, how they fight. & That is why I like it.

The boys who liked images of automobiles explained that they found cars ‘beautiful, or that they ‘run fast’ ‘with turbo speed’. The boys who liked images of athletic events best emphasised the fact that they engaged in sports, especially football. Dimitri and Giorgos, for example, both aged 8 said, ‘I play football myself’.

There were a few children who gave miscellaneous rationales. One girl said *Barbie* is ‘meant to be for children’ while a boy said *Batman* and *Spiderman* ‘are for boys’. One 7-year-old girl said that she liked a poster depicting the Acropolis because ‘it is surrounded by trees’. Roudina, aged 11 ½, said she liked to watch TV programmes because of ‘the variety of movies’ available. Seven-year-old Anna said she liked looking at shop windows displays

best because she liked new clothes; and Tasos, aged 11, said he liked to watch the TV programme *Icones* because he wanted to do the same job as the journalist who presented it.

Some children did not respond to this question perhaps because they did not know how to. Another possible explanation is that straightforward ‘why’ questions are threatening for young children. Although my intention was not to ask this kind of question, I departed from this aim because I got stressed. Or perhaps these children expected to be asked the question individually as is the case in Greek schools. On reflection, I should have repeated the questions more often instead of expecting children to remember them.

3.6 IMPACT OF VISUAL CULTURE ON CHILDREN’S LIVES

The interviews sought to determine if and how primary age children appropriated information from visual culture and if they understood the way it impacts on their lives. They were asked to respond to four questions on this topic. First, to tell me what they discussed with friends about the visual images they looked at. Second, to explain how they decorated their bedrooms and how they chose the decorative items they used. Third, to talk about the content of their own drawings/paintings and explain which were the sources of inspiration. Fourth, to name their favourite heroes/heroines and discuss whether they imitated them, for example, by playing out scenes from their preferred TV programmes.

3.6.1 Peer Interactions about Visual Culture

The majority of children said they did discuss the things they looked at in everyday life with friends. However, a few of them answered ‘no’, and a few others commented that they preferred to play with friends, or talk about other things, responses which they did not explain.

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| Nicon (7 years): | I don’t discuss children’s TV programmes at all. I just play football sometimes with Antony and John and I am the referee. |
| Christina (8 years): | I don’t discuss what happened [in TV programmes] with my friends. |
| Researcher: | Don’t you discuss anything at all with your friends? Do you just sit without talking? |
| Christina: | No, we discuss. |
| Researcher: | What are you talking about? |

Christina: / Err! Many things.
 Researcher: Could you tell me one of these?
 Christina: Err! //

The majority of children, who had responded affirmatively to previous question, did not talk about objects they saw in the real world (the natural or built environment). Instead, they talked about mass media images in the form of favourite TV programmes, animated cartoons, or movies. The majority of girls and one or two boys aged between 8 and 12 said they discussed episodes from soap operas, comedies or dramas watched the previous day, jokes heard on TV, seasonable themes such as the Eurovision song contest, and the showbiz gossip that is the main topic of everyday afternoon Greek talk-shows.

Orestis (10 years): I talk with my friends, but not here (at school), where I live with my auntie. I tell them for her, in *Sto Para Pente*, when the blond woman rung the bell and he (the bad guy) came out and (? the fat woman fell down).

Helen (11 years): We talk about what we see on TV.
 Christine: Or, what we predict will happen in the following episodes.
 Helen: We talk about Eurovision (song contest).
 Researcher: What do you say about Eurovision, Helen?
 Helen: We say *Vissy* (Greek singer) will go there but we haven't found yet the person who will write the lyrics, the dancers, and (we talk) about what will happen at the end.

The majority of children who talked about comics and animated cartoons shown on TV were aged between 6 and 8. For example, Nicos, aged 7 ½, said, 'I discuss how it was with my friends and if they watched it'. Fanis, aged 7, also said, 'With some friends of mine who watch the same children's TV programmes with me at school or, when we meet up we talk about the episode, what happened or if we liked it'. Having a similar taste to peers or watching the same programmes in order to talk about them was important for these children. According to 11-year-old Fotini, all her best friends watched *SpongeBob Squarepants* and discussed the funny things he and his friends did. For others, like 9 ½-year-old Christos it was important to watch 'exciting things' happening in his favourite animated TV programme, *Yo-Gi-Oh*, so that he could talk about them with friends.

A few boys aged between 7 and 12 mentioned discussing images of athletic events, especially football, with friends. Their conversations were about goals and points scored in the champion's league in Greece, or about important athletic events like the European and World Football Cups.

Leon (9 years): (We talk about) football, Olympic Games, all the important events that happen [some children laugh].
Researcher: Which important events?
Leon: Athletic events. The Eurocup Greece won, the World Cup=

Velissarios and Gena, aged 7 ½, Christopher and Mohamed, aged 10, Vasilios, aged 10 ½, Georgi and Tina, aged 11, Chrysie, aged 9 ½, and Phil aged 8 ½ all said they discussed the films they watched in the cinema or on TV with peers but it was not clear what they talked about exactly. However, it appears that these conversations usually took place after they had watched a film. Vasilios, aged 10 ½, for example, said he discussed *Harry Potter* after he went to the cinema to see it, while 9 ½ -year-old Chrysie said that she and her friends discussed what they liked and disliked about the films they had watched. Alexander, aged 10 ½, Sebastian, aged 9 ½, Demis and Lampis, aged 11, on the other hand, said they discussed computer and console games with peers and in particular their functions and ways of changing racetracks in order to play at advanced level.

Elie aged, 9 ½, and Phil, aged 8 ½, said they discussed advertisements with friends. Elie also mentioned that she and her friends decided which goods, magazines and toys to buy together after they had looked at TV advertisements. Chrysie, aged 9 ½, and Athena, aged 8 ½, said they talked about favourite singers and actors with friends while Ismini, aged 9, Elena, aged 11 ½, and Anastasia, aged 10 ½, said they discussed comics and magazines they read. Miscellaneous answers included discussion of children's own drawings/paintings, clothes and toys viewed in shop windows, stories and illustrations in books, and places children had visited.

3.6.2 Visual Images on Bedroom Walls

I asked the children what kinds of images they had on their bedroom, to name who chose them and to explain their choices. However, this question confused two 6-year-old boys who

mentioned TV sets, balls, a hat-rack, and other pieces of furniture in their bedrooms. Some children told me they did not have anything on their walls. The reasons were either that their parents did not let them do this, or that they did not have a bedroom of their own. Dea, aged 7, said: 'I sleep in the living room'. Similarly, Fotoula, aged 8, said: 'I do not have a bedroom. I sleep at my grandmothers or in the living room'. Others said they planned to decorate their bedroom walls in the future, for example 'when we move in to a new house, because this one is small', or when they found appropriate posters. Ten-year-old Dimitri said: 'I haven't put anything on my walls at present, because I haven't found anything. But I want to put up something'. For some others, who shared bedrooms with brothers and sisters, not decorating walls was a matter of principle. Tina, aged 11, told me that her brother's 'side is full of posters' so she left hers empty on purpose; while Kostas, aged 8, said he had detached the posters his brother stuck on their bedroom walls.

The majority of children who did decorate their bedroom walls said they covered them with posters from magazines and newspapers. Some girls and a few boys, all aged 8-10, said they put up posters portraying Greek or international celebrities such as actors, singers and football players.

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Roudina (11 ½ years): | I have (posters with) <i>Jessica Simpson</i> (American singer), <i>Nino</i> (Greek singer); I had him but I threw him away because it was torn. Err, err! / |
| Researcher: | Where is <i>Jessica Simpson</i> from? |
| Roudina: | She is English. |
| Researcher: | What is she? |
| Roudina: | She is a singer. [She continues about the posters she has.] <i>Jennifer Lopez!</i> (American singer and actress). |
| Researcher: | Why have you hung them up? |
| Roudina: | Because I like them. |
| Researcher: | What exactly do you like about them? |
| Roudina: | Them. Their faces. |
| Researcher: | What is about their faces? |
| Roudina: | Beauty. And they do not gain a single kilo [she laughs]. |
| : | |
| :Elena (11 ½ years): | I have posters, like the ones with <i>Kalomoira</i> (Greek singer), <i>Anipotaktes Kardies</i> , err! <i>Sakis Rouvas</i> (Greek singer) & (?...) Err! What else do I have? |
| Researcher: | Why do you have posters of celebrities? |
| Elena: | Because they are public persons (she means they are famous and everybody knows them) and I like to have them on my |

wall, so somebody comes to see them. & And I have a poster that is calendar, err, and it has a woman now on a motorbike.
 Mario: (12 years): Ah! I also have something like that [General laughter].
 Roudina (11 ½ years): I see!!
 :
 :
 Researcher: Why do you have these posters hanging on your walls?
 Vasilios: Because I like them.
 Mario: I have also singers. *Eminem*, *Brother*. Footballers. *Ronaldinho*. Who else do I have? *Smack Down*. *Colley*, he is amazing.

Some children, mostly aged between 6 and 7, said they decorated their bedrooms with posters of comic characters, such as *The Looney Tunes*, *Goofy*, *Donald Duck* or the ‘Princesses’ namely, *Cinderella*, *Snow White and Belle*.

Mohamed (10 ½ years): I have, I see, visual images from *ninja*::
 Research: Have you put visual images from *ninja* in your bedroom?
 Mohamed: Yes, *Ninja* turtles and *Power Rangers*. & Because I like them.

Maria (9 years): I have a poster of *Barbie and the Pauper*. Err! *The Princess and the Pauper*.
 Researcher: What is that?
 Maria: Err! There are two *Barbies* and they are together with the princess and their cat. They are *The Princess and the Pauper*.
 Researcher: Why have you put this poster in your bedroom?
 Maria: Because I like them. & Err! I like that they have these (animals), her cat and that *Pauper* has her little doggy.

A few boys and girls told me their posters depicted either their favourite football team or the Greek national team that won European Cup in 2004.

Velisarios (7 ½ years): My cousins gave me a poster with the national team and I hung it up.
 Researcher: Why did you hang up the poster of the national team?
 Velisarios: Because it is my favourite team.
 Researcher: The national football or basketball team?
 Velisarios: The football team. & They were, they took a picture when the players were all together.

Finally, Gena, Mathew and Nicos, aged 7, Irina, aged 10 ½, and Savvas, aged 11, said their posters depicted animals including ‘doggies’, ‘kittens’, ‘little bears’, and ‘horses’. Esmeralda and Jonela, aged 6, said they had put up posters depicting Santa Claus they found in

newspapers or magazines, while Adele, aged 7, and Elpida, aged 8, said their posters depicted the Acropolis. Giorgos, Christopher, Vasilios, and Elvis, aged between 8 and 12, said their posters depicted cars, motorbikes, and famous racing drivers like *Valentino Rossi*.

Some boys and girls used their own drawings/paintings to decorate their bedroom walls. Eight-year-old Vicky said 'I sometimes stick my own drawings/paintings I made (on the wall), in order to remember when (the time I made them) and I write the date and how old I was then'.

Jenny (6 years):	(I have put) Drawings that I have done. & I don't remember all of them now! I remember that I had drawn/painted an excavator::
Researcher:	What is the excavator?
Jenny:	Err! I don't remember.
Researcher:	Do you remember where have you seen it?
Jenny:	No, it was in sketch block that I painted it and then I tore the page and I stuck it on my bedroom.

Some children decorated their bedroom walls with religious icons. Both the children themselves and parents had chosen to do this. Demis, aged 11½, said he had two icons, one that depicted Jesus and another that depicted St Demetrious 'in order to protect him'. Similarly, 6-year-old Linos said he hung up an icon with 'the God to guard him' and made the sign of the cross to it before he went to sleep. Eleven-year-old Lampis told me he 'liked' the Jesus' icon in his room but did not explain this further. Possibly, he found it aesthetically pleasing to look at it. As Spanaki (1993) and Varvounis (1995) point out religious icons, which have a role in religious behaviour, customs and traditions, are commonly used for both decorative and devotional purposes in Greece.

There were some miscellaneous responses. They included (i) paintings or artefacts purchased with parents; (ii) calendars found in magazines; (iii) puzzles completed with their families; or (iv) birthdays cards.

Demi (8 years):	I have put some of my photos and one=. I have put some painting and a calendar (on the wall).
Researcher:	Yes! Where did you find them?
Demi:	We bought two paintings. And the calendar is, when they took a photo of us at school, they put us in a calendar and I have put this in my bedroom.

Anastasia (10 ½ years): I haven't put anything particular. My dad made a puzzle and we hung it up. I have put a calendar up too.

Mary (11 years): I have big cards people gave me as a present for my birthday in my bedroom and I also have a cross.

Finally some children mentioned their own and/or family photographs. Their answers suggested these had personal significance for them and reminded them of places they had visited, or pleasant moments in their lives. 'I have (photos of) when my brother and I were young, as a memoir', said 11-year-old Hara. Zac, aged 7 ½, also said he had a photo of himself taken 'one summer when we went to my favourite village in Crete'.

Choice of Decoration

When they started talking about decorating their bedroom walls, many children repeated the formulation 'I have....' before giving an answer, in a manner reminiscent of ownership and/or choice. However, the young ones, aged between 6 and 10, and those who shared bedrooms with siblings could not say precisely who chose the items or hung them on the walls.

Christopher (10 years): I have put up a (poster with a) singer.
Researcher: Really? Who is he?
Christopher: *Nicos Vertis* because my sister likes him.
Researcher: You or your sister put it up?
Christopher: My sister.
Researcher: Then?
Christopher: I have put things close to my bed, things like that, footballers. I have photos of cars.

Nikon (7 years): I have only put up a Jesus' icon. & In my mum's room I have put up a woman who is pulled along by her dogs.
Researcher: Where did you find these pictures?
Nikon: Err! What=. I don't remember. I didn't buy them.

Athena (8 ½ years): I, in my bedroom, we have put up the portraits we had pain(ted), when we went holidays in Lefkada (a Greek island) and a good painter painted me and my brother, and we stuck them above our desk. Err, We have=, I have a beautiful icon of the Virgin Mary and little Jesus. That's all.

According to Piaget (2002), children aged between 6 and 7 are still at an egocentric stage of cognitive development, which implies that they can only think and talk from their own point of view. That may explain why the majority of these children told me they chose the posters, religious icons, or paintings by themselves. It is also possible that those who shared bedrooms collaborated with brothers and sisters on choices. This may explain why they used both first person singular and plural. A few children said they made use of objects such as posters, completed puzzles, and paintings parents, friends or relatives had given them. Adele, aged 7, for example, put a poster of cats on her bedroom wall her mother had found in a magazine. Other children said that their parents decorated their bedroom walls with religious icons, small paintings, or family photographs.

Theodor (6 years):	...(I have) A small picture.
Researcher:	What is on it?
Theodor:	Only flowers. & It is from the nursery that I was at. I do not have anything else.
Researcher:	Who put it there?
Theodor:	My mum. & And on the radiator I have some small Holy Maries.
Researcher:	Who did put there the Holy Maries? You, or your mum?
Theodor:	I did.

Reasons for Choices

I asked the children to explain why they chose posters, religious icons, family photographs, their own drawings or other objects to decorate their bedroom walls. In explaining why they chose celebrity posters they talked about the physical appearance and talents of favourite actors and singers and said they were their fans. Marian, aged 12, told me she hung up a poster of *Hatziyiannis* because she liked his voice. Savvas, aged 11, explained he had posters of *Yiannis Tsimitselis* ‘because he is my best actor’. Christine, aged 11, had a poster of *Candy Girls* because she liked their voices and thought they looked beautiful.

Children who mentioned having posters depicting ‘small animals’, ‘kittens’, ‘doggies’, ‘butterflies and hearts’, ‘automobiles’ and religious images on their walls tended to use the non-committal statement ‘I like them’ to justify their choices. For, example, Gena, aged 7 ½, said she ‘liked a poster with butterflies and hearts very much’; and Lampis, aged 11, also ‘liked’ the religious icons he had in his bedroom.

Some boys and girls responses suggested their reasons were aesthetic. In particular, they told me they used posters and other objects because these made the ‘space beautiful’, gave ‘colour to the room’, and because they didn’t like ‘empty walls’. Their responses suggested they chose the objects for decorative purposes mainly. For example, Zac, aged 7 ½, said his self-portrait was there because ‘it makes the room more beautiful’. He added that his parents had painted his room and ‘without any pictures on the wall it was plain blue’.

The pleasure of viewing certain decorative items was also the main explanation given by Sarah aged 10, Jessie, aged 11 ½, Johnny, aged 7 ½, Irin, aged 11, Sandra, aged 12, and Georgios, aged 6. Sara explained she hung up a poster with a kitten because she ‘liked to look at it’. Johnny gave the same reason for covering a wall with posters depicting *Junior*; and Irin said she liked to look at the posters and photographs from her holidays that covered her walls.

Vicky, Akis, Mary, Nikoleta and Hara, aged between 8 and 12, explained that the main reason they put photographs of family and friends’ on their bedroom walls was to remind themselves of happy moments in the past. Nicky, aged 7, told us a photograph of herself at *Karya*, reminded her of the place where she spent summer holidays and a ‘bicycle that she misses’. Eleven-year-old Nicoleta explained that she ‘was attached to photos’ from the past. This is consistent with Duncum’s (2003) comment that personal and family photographs are important in people’s lives as attachments to the past.

Very few children appeared to hang objects on walls for utilitarian or didactic purposes. Jesika, aged 6 ½, told us she liked to look at the map her parents put on her wall because ‘it shows the world’, while Foto, aged 6, said she used the calendar on her wall to ‘check the months’. On the other hand, 10-year-old Orestis told me he used the poster of *Juventus* (an Italian football team) on his wall as a darts-board. One or two children said the religious icons on their walls were there ‘for protection’ or to ‘guard’ them.

3.6.3 Subject Matter of Children's Drawings/Paintings

One question asked about the subject matter of and source of inspiration for the children's own paintings/drawings. The Greek verb 'zograzizo' used during the interviews means both to draw and paint. The vast majority of children said they drew/painted both at home and/or at school. However, a few told me they did not, either because they did not enjoy it or found it boring and preferred to watch TV, read books, or chat with friends. According to Kellogg (1967), it is commonplace for children to lose their natural interest in drawing/painting or abandon it because they have been discouraged by adults at some point in time. But I did not ask why they did not like drawing/painting as this question was not included in the interview schedule.

Orestis (10 years): Drawing/Painting is too boring and I don't do it. It is too boring.

Demis (11 ½ years): I don't draw/paint. I don't like it.

Michael (9 ½ years): I don't draw/paint. I simply watch TV.

Chrysie (9 ½ years): I don't draw/paint. Let's say I prefer reading a book.

The subject matter these children drew/painted included scenes from the built and natural environment and specifically 'houses', 'trees', 'forests', 'the sea', 'fields', 'places covered with snow', 'villages', 'mountains', and 'the sun and the sky'. They also told me they drew/painted human figures of 'little children', 'people' and 'little people'. A few children, aged between 6 and 10, said they drew/painted characters in comics and animated cartoons such as *Barbie*, *SpongeBob Squarepants*, *Spiderman* and *Batman*, or landscapes from favourite TV animated programmes. Maria, aged 9, for example, said she drew/painted 'a fairyland' after watching *Barbie Fairytopia*. A few girls, aged between 8 and 12, told me they drew/painted 'girls wearing beautiful clothes' or 'clothes'. Roula, aged 11, described the subject matter of one of her most recent drawings as 'a wedding dress' for her doll. A few boys said they drew/painted 'battle-ships', 'cars', 'boats', 'aeroplanes' and 'pistols'.

Philip and Georgios, aged 7 ½, Nastasia, aged 8, Christen and Artemis, aged 11, said they coloured-in sheets that they downloaded from the Internet, or that teachers gave them at school.

Nastasia (8 years): I keep some sheets our teacher gives us at school and colour them in and then I give them to my mum’.

Georgios (7 ½ years): Me? Miss, I have (some sheets) from my computer [

Georgie (7 ½ years): [You don’t have a computer [

Georgios: [I have. Miss, I (download them) from the computer. It has racing cars and I print them and then I colour them in.

One or two boys and girls aged 6 said they drew/painted ‘hearts’. Dea for example said: ‘I draw/paint hearts with legs, hands and eyes which pick flowers’. Andrew, Anna, Marinos and Theodor, aged between 6 and 7, told me that they only drew/painted animals including ‘fishes’, ‘cats and dogs’, ‘horses’, ‘rabbits and birds’. Catherine, Nansy, Katrina and Tasos, aged between 10 ½ and 12, said they tried to copy images from school textbooks and magazines first, but then traced them if this proved to be difficult. Eleven-years-old Nansy told us: ‘when I draw I look at images in our textbooks, in Maths, in History, and I copy them. But when I cannot (copy them), because they are difficult and have lots of lines, then I trace them’.

Mario, Fotini, Dimitri and Savvas, aged between 10 ½ and 12, drew/painted ‘lettering from teams and movies’ or their nick-names. Mohamed, Christopher, Radovan, aged 10, and Ioannis, aged 7, drew/painted athletes and/or athletic events such as ‘football matches’, ‘*Beckam* and *Rivaldo*,’ ‘the Brazilian football team’ and ‘basketball’. A few children, mostly girls, were unable to say exactly what they drew/painted. Jenny and Eri, aged 6, for example, said they could not remember the subject matter of any of their drawings/paintings. Christine, aged 11, told me she drew/painted on papers ‘important things’ she remembered or had seen in the past. Finally, Leon and Sarah described drawings/paintings that were abstract.

Leon (9 years): I don’t know how to draw/paint objects [cough]. I draw/paint and whatever comes out. Abstract art.

Sarah (10 years): I draw/paint lots of things. Let’s say with watercolours I am doing small dots on the paper. And I wear an apron [general laughter]. I do abstract art.

Researcher: Can you tell us more about this abstract art?

Sarah: I take a ruler and I start to do lines on the paper. I do lines with my hand and if something comes out. Whatever it comes out.

Researcher: And how do you know that something came out?
 Sarah: Err! Then I look very carefully and I turn the paper around till I see something there.
 Researcher: Something that has meaning to you?
 Sarah: Err! Yes

Sources of Inspiration

When the children were asked where they got ideas for their drawings/paintings some of them said they came from mass media, especially animated cartoons, TV programmes, magazines, and computer games. They got ideas for drawing/painting 'heroes and dinosaurs', 'bears', 'ballerinas', 'the fairyland' and 'monsters' from these sources.

Irina (10 ½ years): I draw/paint small bears with dolls. & Err! Like the ones they have at mickey mouse (she means animated cartoon programmes).

Joanna (6 years): I draw/paint ballet dancers, some scenes they have on children's TV programmes. These, I try=.

Sebastian (9 ½ years): I don't paint. I simply draw heroes, dinosaurs, and many others. Most of them are of heroes. & From the cartoons on TV.

Nicos (7 ½ years): Miss, I have drawn/painted lots of things. Castles, houses, ships, horses, men.

Researcher: Were do you get ideas from?

Nicos: From cartoons or toys.

Vicky (8 years): I draw/paint animals like horses, and I also draw/paint gi= girls who wear beautiful clothes.

Researcher: Where do you get ideas for all these from?

Vicky: From magazines and from TV.

Some boys and girls said they imagined the things they drew/painted and suggested everything came from inside their own minds.

Alex (6 years): I make little flowers, err! houses:: I make, err!, flowers. & Nothing else.

Researcher: Where do you get ideas from?

Alex: In my mind.

Dimitri (8 years): I draw/paint houses::, mountains, whatever comes into my mind I draw/paint.

Some other children said they were inspired from objects and events of everyday life. They appeared to regard the built and natural environment as sources of inspiration.

Elpida (8 years): I draw/paint= / I draw/paint birds, butterflies, err! Trees, little children, little hearts, little animals, and I get ideas from my everyday life and imagination.

Christiana (11 years): I draw/paint houses, flowers, the sky, the sun!
Researcher: Where do you get ideas for all these you draw/paint from?

Christiana: From my surroundings [

Elvis (12 years): [The everyday life

Christiana: & The everyday life, nature.

Alekos (8 years):[I draw/paint] Scenes from my everyday life, / animals::, mountains:: and seas and wars.

Georgis (12 years): Once I saw =. I went in the forest in *Mpouka* (a place in North Ileia) and I saw three-four birds on a branch and I had a small piece of paper with me and I drew them.

Although the question was about sources of inspiration for drawing/painting, a few children, aged between 6 and 9, talked about how their parents and siblings helped them learn how to draw/paint things. Six-year-old Mario, for example, said: ‘My father taught me how to make boats and aeroplanes’. Andrew, aged 6, was taught to make fishes he ‘saw in the lake’ by his father. Jonela, also aged 6, said her sister showed her how to make ‘*Barbies* and boy-dolls’. A few older children said friends or other adult’s drawings also gave them ideas of what to draw.

Jessie (11 ½ years): I drew two girls, err! who=, I put arrows as if=, like they are talking with a boy standing next to them [general laughter].

Researcher: Have you seen this somewhere else? Where did you get the idea from?

Jessie: From a friend of mine. & She did something similar, with a different meaning, but I did the same.

Nikoleta (11 years): I was in a painting exhibition and I had, err! drawn/ painted a daisy and a sun. It was a very nice picture.

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Gina (11 ½ years): I went also to the same place as Nikoleta and painted a sunset.

3.6.4 Favourite Heroes/Heroines

I asked children who their favourite heroes and heroines were and to give me reasons why they liked them. In response, many boys and girls named mass media superheroes like *Spiderman*, *Batman*, *Superman*, *Flash Gordon*, *Power Rangers*, and *Yu-Gi-Oh*. They said they liked them because they were ‘unbeatable’, they ‘save people’, ‘fight the evil’, and ‘are good’. They also said they liked them because they had supernatural powers and did extraordinary things. Only Nansy, an 11-year-old girl, mentioned the female superhero *Catwoman* and said she liked her because ‘she tries to save society from some thieves, she transformed into a cat, and does things that are good for society’.

Zac (7 ½ years): I like *Batman*. & Because he saves people. & I like him because he fights the bad guys, err!, he runs=, he escapes from the police, because the police are chasing him:: He helps people::

Elena (11 ½ years): (I like) *Superman*. & Yes! Because err! (? He is good), and because he flies in the sky like birds and is strong.

Some boys and girls, mostly aged between 6 and 10, liked comics and animated cartoons characters like *Mickey Mouse*, *Bugs Bunny*, *SpongeBob Squarepants*, *Donald Duck*, *Goofy*, *Popeye* and *Tweety* because they were humorous.

Ilias (10 years): Err! (I like most) Disney cartoons. Because they are fun, and they entertain us.

Helen (11 years): I like most *Donald Duck* and *Bugs Bunny*. I like *Donald Duck* because he speaks in a funny way and I don/t understand what he says and this is funny. (I like) *Bugs Bunny* because he is mischievous and the person who chases him, he [*Bugs Bunny*] sets obstacles in his way and puzzles him.

Nicos (7 ½ years): Err! I like from, I like *Zorro*, *Bugs Bunny* and *Taz*. *Zorro* has suspense, *Bugs Bunny* is clever and has many friends and *Taz* is also clever but *Bugs Bunny* does whatever he wants with him.

A few girls who mentioned the animated cartoon female characters *Minnie Mouse*, *Daisy Duck*, *Lola Bunny* and *Sandy* as favourite heroines explained they were ‘funny’, ‘smart’, and ‘sweet’, and ‘change outfits’. Adele, aged 7, and Fotini, aged 11, compared them with the male characters of the comics/animated cartoons and underlined the fact that they were smart and dynamic too.

Christiana (11 years): (My favourite heroine is) *Minnie Mouse*....& Because she is like *Mickey* when she has problems, she is very clever::

The majority of girls aged between 6 and 10 liked heroines like *Cinderella*, *Belle*, and *Barbie* because they were ‘beautiful’, ‘dance and sing beautifully’ and ‘have nice clothes’. Younger girls appeared to favour these characters for both their physical appearance and talents or skills.

Cathy (6 years): (My favourite heroine is) *Belle* and *Jasmine*. & Because they dance, go skiing, and get married.

Yugin and Christopher, aged between 8 and 10, mentioned *Smack Down* stars from the American wrestling TV show called *WWE Wrestling Special*. They talked about how ‘well’ *Mysterio* and *Cena* fight and how ‘strong’ they are. Tasos, aged 11, on the other hand, said he liked Ronaldinho best because he is ‘great footballer’. Jessie and Roudina, Orestis, Irin, Athina, Nikoleta and Gina aged between 9 and 12 identified with actors and singers. They mentioned *Angelina Jolie*, *Brad Pitt*, *Van Dam*, *Johnny Depp*, *Xatziyiannis* and characters in *Anipotaktes Kardies (Rebelde Way)*. They also mentioned they admired their physical appearance and acting. Christiana, aged 11, Sandra, aged 12, and Mina, aged 9, who could not distinguish actresses from the characters they played, identified the following attributes that attracted their attention.

Sandra (12 years): (I like) *Camilla* (? *Bordonaba*). & Err! You showed us her photograph. She plays / *Marizza* (in *Anipotaktes Kardies*). & Err! She is rebellious. She is dymanic::

Athena (12 years): I like *Louisiana Lopilato* (from *Anipotaktes Kardies*).Because she is beautiful::; because all the boys are running after her. & Because she is beautiful that is why I like her.

A few children appeared to favour heroes/heroines with desirable personality traits like courage and braveness. Dimitri, aged 10, and Savvas aged 11, liked *Gandalf* and *Legolas* from the *Lord of the Rings* because they fight and have ‘big swords’, ‘kill fast’ and are ‘handsome’. Velissarios and Nicos, aged 7, and Cony, aged 11, liked the film-hero *Zorro* because he ‘fights and saves people’ and ‘fights with his sword’. Nikos and Andy aged 7, liked the film-hero *Robin Hood* because he ‘is good at hitting targets with his arrow’.

A few children aged between 10 and 12, mentioned *Harry Potter* but appeared confused as they could not distinguish between actor and character. So, their explanations as to why they liked him varied in terms that they mentioned his job, physical appearance, and desirable personality traits, like challenging social norms. For example, Vasilios, aged 10 ½, said he liked ‘his stories’ meaning probably that he found the plot lines of films interesting. Chrysie, aged 9 ½, liked him because he ‘makes nice movies and is successful and handsome and dares to do things in order help his friends’. Effe, aged 11, liked *Harry Potter* and his friends, *Hermione* and *Ron*, because they ‘disobey some rules’ of their school and ‘this has some action’.

Two children, who mentioned Hercules and Ulysses as favourite heroes from animated cartoons or films, did not explain why they liked them. A few others told me they did not have a favourite hero/heroine. Dimitri, aged 8, explained that this was because he did not watch much TV. Anastasia, aged 10 ½, and Akis, aged 12, could not remember the name of a favourite hero/heroine.

Acting out Roles from TV Programmes

I asked children to tell me about any roles they played out from TV programmes, films or animated cartoons. As expected, their responses were gendered. The majority of girls told me they acted out roles of princesses, mothers, and singers. It seems that films, TV programmes, advertisements and magazines provided them with these kinds of stereotyped role models to enact.

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|-----------------------|---|
| Vicky (8 years): | Err! Sometimes with my friends we pretend we are princesses. |
| Researcher: | What do you do exactly? |
| Vicky: | (We pretend) That we have a huge kingdom, and when we are at my place we wear dresses. And my friend wears a skirt and I wear a dress that I had. |
| Jessie (11 ½ years): | (I pretend to be) <i>Mia</i> , of <i>Anipotaktes Kardies</i> (Argentinean telenovela) sometimes. |
| Researcher: | Yes, carry on. |
| Jessie: | Err! That’s all. |
| Roudina (11 ½ years): | Well, (we pretend to be) <i>Mia</i> , the way she walks, she behaves. |

Sandra (12 years): In the past, I, Athina and one of our friends we played out *To Pio Gliko mas Psema* (a Greek TV drama) and we did whatever these three friends did. I was *Joanna*, [pointing at Athina] she was *Natalie*, and our friend was *Maria*.

Researcher: Yes? And what did you do?

Sandra: We did whatever we remembered from the last episode we had seen.

Researcher: Did you repeat scenes and the words these actresses said?

Sandra: No.

Researcher: Did you put your own words?

Sandra: Yes. Sometimes we made up our own stories but with the same characters.

Only two girls said they enacted roles of super-heroines, namely *Xena* and *Catwoman*. They also admitted that their efforts to imitate the things these heroines did failed. It is possible that they wanted to experiment with gender roles that are different from the traditional female roles of mother and wife.

Efie (11 years): OK/ I don't like to imitate others very much, because I tried it once and it didn't turn out right. & I was younger then [she laughs] and I tried to imitate *Xena* [general laughter]. I climbed on the window [she laughs] and there was not anything underneath, either a balcony or nothing, and I almost fell down.

Nansy (11-year-old): I sometimes used to try to imitate *Catwoman*. I wore a black bag on my head & And I tried to do something like her. She is jumping from window to window [general laughter]. I tried to jump on the coffee-table of course=[

Researcher: Do you still do these kinds of things?

Nansy: No! I hurt myself. That is why I didn't do it again.

Voices: I still do that! (They mean similar things).

Researcher: How old were you when you did that?

Nansy; (I did it) Two months ago.

Two girls mentioned participating in aggressive, masculine forms of play. Angela, aged 9, said she played 'boxing' with her brother and they hit 'the air' because he is very young. Claudia, aged 11, also said she played with her brother and they pretended to kick each other.

The majority of boys, on the other hand, told me they imitated and enacted roles of comic superheroes and to a lesser extent *Smack Down* stars, and film characters like *Legolas* and

Harry Potter. Their imitated ‘karate-movements’, ‘acrobatics’, and imaginative ‘fights with bad guys’, which suggests a strong desire on their part to appear powerful and strong. These aggressive forms of play hovered between fun and seriousness as some of them admitted they fought for real and others talked about imaginary fights.

- Researcher: Do you pretend to be *Batman*?
Georgis (12 years): Fie::! I give my brother a good thrashing because he is the bad guy. & Let’s say now I am *Batman* and my brother is *Penguin*. And he is kidnapping my mum and then I go and give him a good thrashing [general laughter].
Cony (11 ½ years): For fun or=/
Georgis: Not for fun. For real!
- Kostas (8 years): Err! I play with my brother. We play *Superman*. And he is pretending the bad guy and I / fight with him
Researcher: Ah! You fight with your brother. Do you hit him?
Kostas: Not for real! It is fake.

The version of masculinity - strong, powerful, aggressive - offered by superheroes appeared to be particularly appealing to the boys aged between 6 and 7. They told me that they did enact favourite heroes and wanted to be like them when they grew up.

- Researcher: You want to be like *Superman*?
Theodor (6 years): (I want) To be strong [he is showing his muscles]
Researcher: What is that you are doing now?
Theodor: I want to have a huge arm.
Researcher: Yes! And why do want that?
Theodor: To lift cars. If there is a bad guy and has inside somebody. Shouldn’t I lift the car ?

Children’s accounts revealed a huge impact of superhero culture not only on children’s play activities but also on their relationships with classmates and friends. Three boys told me they tried to protect friends from ‘bad boys’.

- Researcher: Do you want to be like Zorro, Velissarios?
Velissarios (7 ½ years): Yes!
Researcher: What exactly do you want to be?
Velissarios: (I want) To have power in my hands and wherever they touches=. Last year, for example, a boy annoyed my friend. Helen, I grabbed him - he thought that because he was in an older class he could do whatever he wanted to me - and I threw him on the ground.

3.7 CHILDREN'S UNDERSTANDING OF VISUAL CULTURE INFLUENCES

In answer to the question 'what do you think you learn from the visual images you see in everyday life?' some children could not distinguish between learning and 'receiving information'. In my view 'learning' refers to acquisition of knowledge that can change one's behaviour or way of thinking; whereas 'receiving information' primarily refers to messages, facts, concepts, instructions, or knowledge acquired and understood. The children told me that they 'learned' from documentary films, books, and magazines about people and animals living elsewhere, or from TV News about what happens in Greece and the world.

Roula (11 years): I watch documentary films and I learn about the various animals and cities they show. (I learn) about forests. Such kinds of things.

Artemis (10 ½ years): From the News we learn about the world, what is happening around us.

Whereas this is a certain kind of learning, it was not what I had sought to determine by asking children this question. What I wanted to find out was whether they understood the impact of visual culture on their perceptions of self, others and the world. So, after they had responded this way I repeated the question and gave prompts. I asked them to 'think carefully about other things we can learn from looking at visual images and influence us, change the ways we think, or the ways we behave'. Although my intention was to help them understand what 'learning' means, the prompts guided them to answer a specific way. They began to talk about learning social behaviour patterns, such as being polite, and showing respect to elders.

Velissarios (7 ½ years): I watch on *ET2* (Greek TV channel), I watch *Goofy* who is gentleman how he beha=, how he behaves. & (We learn) How to behave ourselves, to have good manners, not to blackmail other people, not to beat them /

Giorgos (8 years): We learn to love other people. (We learn) Not to be misers. & Anyway, from *Looney Tunes* you learn not to be miser, and from *Bags Bunny* too.

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:

Sarah (10 years): From *Looney Tunes* sometimes you learn to cooperate (with others).

Voices: Yes! Yes!

Sarah: Err ! From *Barbie*, which I watch many times, err! I learn not

Researcher: to give away, to have persistence. Let say=[
 Sarah: [Does *Barbie* have obstinacy and faith in the things she does?
 Yes! She tries and tries and if she doesn't succeed she tries again and again till she succeeds & And=, and I feel the action and I understand the things she says and then I start wanting to cooperate (she means with other people), and have persistence.

I was surprised that only a few children said that they learned how to 'fight', make 'jokes', or 'cheat' on others. It is probable that they did not feel very comfortable talking about this kind of learning to an adult, especially a teacher. This is consistent with Buckingham's (1993) claim that children do not admit such kinds of TV influences because they know that teachers and adults disapprove of them.

Christos (9 ½ years): Err! We learn, when somebody is threatening us, how to answer back. Or when somebody beats us to beat him back and not to stay still.

Yugin (8 ½ years): (I learn) How to knock somebody pitilessly.

Mathew, aged 7, Catherine and Helen, aged 11, and Marian, aged 12, who mentioned hearing and repeating 'bad words' or adopted the particular slang used in TV programmes, told me they used phrases such as 'ta exo paiksei' (I got tired) and 'ta eida ola' (I've seen everything).

Fotoula, aged 8, Fotini, Efie and Christine aged 11, Annieza and Anna, aged 7, Chrysie, aged 9 ½, and Dimitri, aged 10, said they learned 'how to choose clothes' and 'dress up' from advertising and TV. They explained they deliberately consulted magazines, such as *Super Katerina*, and TV shows to inform themselves about fashion trends.

Christiana (11 years): The time I bought *Barbie* magazine every month, it wrote about clothes, how you need to dress.

Researcher: What did it write?

Christiana: What trends in fashion are, in colours! & If you are fat, how you can look thinner, or taller::

Researcher: Mmm! Did you follow such kind of advice, for example, for the colours.

Christiana: Yes, when I could and when my mum allowed me to do so. Yes!

Efie (11 years): Well, we like all these things we look at and we want to imitate them. Err! We look at the clothes celebrities wear or the ways

they behave and we want to do the same, we want to be like them.

Researcher: Have you done something like that?

Efie: Not in particular.

Dimitri (10 years): I once saw *Eminem* who wore a tracksuit and he had a hood and then I did it the same way, I dressed like this. And my mum told me ‘why are you like this’

Researcher: And then you took the hood off? [General laughter]

Dimitri: You wish! [General laughter]

Three girls commented that watching TV series, telenovelas and soap operas helped them to learn about people’s characters and gave them clues about how life circumstances can change. Nansy, aged 11, who lived in a small town, said she learned ‘what life is like in big cities’ from watching the TV series *Sto Para Pente* which showed her what kinds of people one can meet there. ‘It shows that there are thieves and murderers and people like that’. Athina, aged 12, said she had learned that one’s life can be changed by unpredictable events. Sandra, aged 12, also mentioned that it is possible to understand oneself better from observing how people react to others with similar personality in a TV series. She added this helps me ‘to understand my mistakes and change’.

Finally, three boys and girls said were clear that they did not learn anything from the visual images they see or learn ‘only from some of them’. Ilias, aged 10, emphasised: ‘we watch TV series just to pass time and forget lessons’. Eleven-year-old Billy told me that he learned ‘about the history of a place’ when he went to museums, or ‘from books and TV documentaries’, but not from TV series or telenovelas.

The group interviews were completed by asking children if they wanted to add anything else or if they thought ‘we had missed anything’. Whereas the majority replied negatively some asked if I was going back to London soon and about the life there. A few asked me what I planned to do after completing the interviews. I told them that I would try to ‘analyse their remarks’ and complete my studies so that I came back to Greece. The next chapter reports on the analysis of this descriptive data and its significance for art education.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEW DATA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

I chose a thematic approach to interpret the interview data because it is a process-oriented methodology that other researchers recommend for organising qualitative data (Boyatzis, 1998; Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). As they point out it enables researchers to systematically study and organise qualitative data into patterns, create categories that summarise them, and combine the identified categories into themes. In this research, I began by organising children's responses into 54 patterns using the computer software Atlas-ti (Appendix 17). The description of the data included in chapter 3 enabled me pick out key phrases and words of children's responses which I summarised into patterns. For example, words like 'suspense' and 'adventure' and key phrases like 'they have battles' and 'it is about war' indicated the pattern which I called 'the quality of suspense as determinant for TV viewing'. Then I arrived at 23 categories that summarised the patterns found previously. For example, reviewing patterns of response referring to 'children's familiarity with visual culture genres', 'direct and indirect visual experiences', 'ability to distinguish between a visual image and a genre' and 'tendency to focus on the subject matter of visual images' were summarised into one category called 'identification of visual culture genres by using previous knowledge and experience'.

After that, I combined the classified categories into sub-themes. For example, one sub-theme brought together components of children's visual and aesthetic experiences and another grouped together children's behaviour, attitudes toward and preferences for visual culture. They were also considered in the light of theory of visual culture and visual culture

education. For example, the sub-theme ‘significance of the built environment in children’s lives’ related children’s accounts about their visual experiences from it, their preferences for viewing it, significance in their lives, and literature on environmental psychology and place experience (Waxman, 2003; Klein, 2000; Lippard, 1997; Gifford, 2002; Carpenter, 2003). The next step was to crosscheck the sub-themes with variables such as age, ethnicity, gender, and region. For example, analysis of age and gender variables revealed significant differences in children’s preferences for TV programmes, subject matter of their drawings/paintings, identification with heroes/heroines and symbolic role play. Comparing sub-themes across variables also enabled me to identify similarities in children’s ideas, visual and aesthetic experiences, and attitudes towards visual culture genres. Finally, after reviewing and revising the sub-themes, I framed them into five interpretative themes to analyse interview data. These were as follows:

1. Classification of visual culture genres
2. Dominance of TV images
3. Bodily response and aesthetic experience
4. Impact of visual culture on everyday activities
5. Understanding the impact of visual culture on identity construction

To explore these themes it was necessary to review more literature. For example, to help me explore the second theme about the dominance of TV image in children’s lives I reviewed literature about children and television, mass media, and visual consumption; whereas to explore the third theme about the significance of bodily response in children’s aesthetic experience I read theories of somaesthetics, aesthetics, and popular and material culture. Finally, for the fourth theme about the impact of visual culture on children’s everyday activities I reviewed literature on children’s role-play and drawings, formation of gender identity, and role models and children’s socialisation. So, this chapter presents the thematic interpretation of data, reflection on the group interviews, and ends with discussing implications for next part of the research.

4.2 DATA ANALYSIS

4.2.1 Classification of Visual Culture Genres

The majority of children in this research appeared to be familiar with most of the visual culture genres included in the research tool and could recognise them. They appeared to have what Goldie (2006) calls ‘direct’ and ‘indirect’ visual experience of most of the genres. Goldie (2006) defines ‘direct’ visual and aesthetic experiences as those occurring in physical places or cultural sites, for example viewing a painting in a museum. Indirect ones involve viewing through another medium, for example recycled images from fine arts in TV programmes, advertisements, magazines or books. In this research, the children referred to their indirect visual experiences from genres like graffiti, ballet performances and fine arts occurred mainly when they watched TV. Many children in this research, for example, said they had seen two well-known masterpieces of Western European art, Da Vinci’s *Mona Lisa* and Picasso’s *Guernica*, on animated cartoon programmes, TV series or advertisements. ‘It is *Mona Lisa*..... I had seen it in a children’s TV programme called *Ann and the King* and it shows it many times’ (Zac, 7 ½ years). The fact that most of them could not recall seeing fine art images, like *Mona Lisa*, and Gyzi’s *Koukou*, in their Greek textbooks suggests the pervasiveness of mass-produced, distributed and consumed visual images in their lives. As Boughton (2004) and Garoian & Gaudelius (2004) point out, visual images from mass media and popular culture are highly seductive in the way they offer viewers pleasure and enhance their fantasies and desires. It appears that these children found them more fascinating than the images in the student textbooks. It is also possible that popular culture visual images would make a more effective learning tool in Greek art education than the student textbooks.

The data showed that these children were able to identify the visual images in the tool from films, TV shows, and computer games that has been produced outside Greece and could name the titles, plot line, and main characters. According to Duncum (2001b) and Tavin & Hausman (2004), the proliferation of mass media ensures that visual images are circulated around the globe. Freedman (1997a, 2003a) points out that children today have more access to visual imagery and are more aware of the existence of a variety of visual culture products than they were fifty years ago. These children’s comments about animated cartoons like *SpongeBob Squarepants*, *Looney Tunes*, and *Power Rangers*, TV programmes like *WWE*

Friday Night Smack Down, and films like *Lord of the Rings*, and *King Kong* suggest that their leisure activities were mainly infiltrated by American influences. This confirms scholars' views on the diffusion of American commercial mass produced and popular culture across Greece (Epitropoulos & Roudometof, 1998; Botsiou, 2006). However, this raises questions about how these children interpreted these kinds of mass media imagery and what kind of judgements they made about the American way of life. For example, Nick, aged 10, held the misconception that all people in the USA are rich. He said: 'I see their homes, what they wear, and how they are in their homes'. As Wilford (2006) points out, consumption of American popular culture may cause wrong judgements about American life. In my view, it is crucial, therefore, for children to learn to deconstruct and think critically of the global visual imagery they see and consume in everyday life. It is also essential to give students opportunities in art lessons to understand that visual images produced elsewhere than Greece are viewed and interpreted through the lenses that their local, regional, or national culture provides them.

The data also revealed that these children, regardless of ethnicity, identified immediately with Greek visual culture genres like street marches/parades, carnival, religious icons, and shadow theatre performance (*Karagiozis*). Visual images of street marches probably had particular significance for these children because they are part of school life in Greece due to the national celebrations of 28 October and 25 March. Similarly, carnival celebrations are part of Greek cultural heritage and children participate in them by dressing up in carnival dresses and going to parties. In my experience, children in Greece also regularly watch traditional shadow theatre (*Karagiozis*) performances at school and on television.

Although they recognised most of visual culture genres shown to them, these children could not classify or name them all using specialist art vocabulary. The fact that they did not use terms such as 'fine arts', 'crafts', 'architecture' or 'book illustration' is problematic given the importance attached to this in the Greek national curriculum (CCTF/ISC, 2003). According to Nelson (1996), language and cognitive development are linked to age as well as to family and the school environment. In this research, age played a significant role in children's ability to label visual culture genres. Children aged between 6 and 9 appeared to

have difficulties labelling genres like ‘fashion shows’, ‘graffiti’, ‘pottery’ and ‘woodcarving’. It is also possible that they had conceptual difficulties also.

Jenny (6 years): [Talking about fashion shows.] They walk and show their clothes.

Gena (7 ½ years): [Talking about graffiti.] Painted walls on the road.

It is probable that children of this age were not able to express their knowledge about or experiences of visual culture with appropriate vocabulary. Within the constraints of this research design, it was not possible to establish the impact of the family environment on the development of an art-specific vocabulary. Similarly, it was not possible to find out whether these children had been taught verbal and visual vocabulary in art lessons. Moreover, most children aged 9-12 did not use the specialist art education vocabulary like ‘architecture’, ‘crafts’, ‘fine arts’ included in student textbooks for art and in national curriculum (CCTF/ISC, 2003). The national curriculum requires that children start to learn from the age of six art terms because this enhances their ability to express thoughts and opinions about art and artworks (CCTF/ISC, 2003, pp. 122; 128; 131; 135). These children’s inability to name visual culture genres probably implies there is a gap between policy and classroom practice. The majority of children did have tacit knowledge about the visual culture genres included, however, in the tool. This counterbalances the fact that they did not know or use specialist art terms. However, because tacit knowledge cannot fully be articulated or explained (Sorri, 1994) Greek art education should give children opportunities to make this knowledge explicit.

Identifying and naming a visual culture genre implies classifying it according to a single or several features that distinguishes from others. For example, art forms, like painting, sculpture, graffiti, and architecture, can be classified by dimension, namely height, width and depth, and sensory appeal, such as to the kinaesthetic and tactile senses (Chapman, p. 22). However, some children could not classify the examples of visual culture genres I showed them probably because of immaturity or because they concentrated exclusively on the subject matter of visual images. In the case of advertisements, most children concentrated on discussion of the products they promoted (shampoo, perfume, mobile phone, shoes and soft drink). ‘This is from *Garnier*. This is a conditioner and a perfume’

(Georgios, 7 ½ years). The distinction between visual image and genre is not therefore always a simple matter for primary age children and probably not for anyone.

Where they managed to classify and name a visual culture genre, they had little difficulty determining its function or use. Chapman (1978, p. 30) points out that all art forms (here visual culture genres) serve a variety of purposes: personal, social, economic, political, religious or educational. These children appeared to be aware of all these functions other than the political. This was confirmed in the discussion of parades and street marches, the purpose of which is to enhance Greek national identity. Some children perceived them only as celebrations but could not say exactly what was being celebrated, while others knew that 25th March and 28th October were remembrance days for those who had fought and lost their lives in wars for Greek independence in 1821 and against Italians and Germans in 1940. It may also be the case that the political function of these parades had not been clearly explained at their schools.

Jessie (11 ½ years): [We participate in street march] Because we want to show something, to show things, what the old ones did.
Vasilios (10 ½ years): [We participate in street march] Err! To remember old stories, the war in 1940.

The discussions of other genres like crafts, religious icons, photographs, book illustrations, TV and advertisements revealed that personal experiences played a significant role rather than school in their understanding of the purposes these kinds of genres serve. In the case of religious icons, children's devotional practices probably influenced them to understand these as vehicles for religious rituals (prayers, kissing, kneeling in front of an icon). As 6-year-old Julian and Antony said, people use icons to 'pray', 'kneel in front of them' and 'light a candle'. Similarly, the majority of children talked about the utilitarian and decorative functions of crafts and the educational and entertainment functions of book illustrations.

Ilias (10 years): [Talking about the function of crafts] People use them in their works.
Dora (10 years): Or to decorate their houses.

I did not ask children to describe the media, style, or formal elements, of visual culture genres included in the tool, because I thought it would be difficult to determine them from small scale reproductions downloaded from the Internet. Whereas some children referred to

the subject matter of TV programmes, photographs, advertisements and fine arts, they did not discuss themes, expressive or symbolic content because no questions about these were included in the interview agenda as this was not an aim of this study.

4.2.2 Dominance of TV Images

The interview data confirmed that visual images from popular culture saturated these children's everyday lives. As Strinati (1995) points out, the content of popular culture appeals to a broad spectrum of the general public because it is largely determined by commercialisation and leisure activities. Television, cinemas, athletic events, public ceremonies, shopping malls, theme parks, urban design, and computer environments are all characteristic sites of visual imagery in popular culture (Duncum, 1997a; 1999). They appeared to have a particular significance in these children's lives because of their ubiquity and accessibility. The visual images they said that they viewed most frequently were all associated with activities they did a lot in everyday life, like watching TV, walking along the road, reading at home and at school, and going shopping.

The interviews revealed that children's attention was directed not only to structured, formal viewing settings like cinema and television, but also to the built environment and to a lesser extent nature. They appeared not to distinguish representations and simulations from sites in real life, when they talked about images they looked at most often. They referred to buildings, shops, monuments, stadiums, roads, and signs in the real world as if they were the same things as the TV programmes they watched at home. They mentioned aspects of the built environment they viewed from their 'home windows' or while they walked from home to school and back in a way that suggested they perceived them as a significant element of their everyday lives.

Johnny (7 ½ years):	I see the buildings houses, cars, shops, parks, playgrounds.
Researcher:	Anything else?
Johnny:	/
Researcher:	And you Anna, what kinds of images do you see most frequently?
Anna (7 years):	I see when I come to school, when I go from school /
Researcher:	Which ones?
Anna:	The same as Johnny. Shops, bookstores, the supermarket opposite the school & houses, block of flats.

It is probable that the built environment offered these children intense visual and aesthetic experiences. Gifford (2002) and Lippard (1997) describe such experiences as 'place attachments' that generate emotions and enable knowledge to be constructed. Moreover, built environments in which people live acquire personal meaning in that they serve as a repository of local knowledge and community memory (Klein, 2000; Waxman, 2003). This implies that the built environment is also a social one. In other words, experiencing it within a local context assumes some form of participation in the life of a local community (Klein, 2000). However, these children did not say anything that suggested they connected the built environment to their life-circumstances or in any other way than walking to school. It was not clear therefore whether they understood it was a social environment or not. To determine this it would be necessary to ask them to share aspects of their lives with reference to neighbourhood, local places and interaction with community members. These kinds of questions require more time than the forty minutes allotted for each group interview.

Although the children talked to a lesser extent about films, graffiti, religious images, book illustration, artworks, automobiles, computer and video games, I gained the impression that their lives were mediated to a significant extent through the visual experience of television. They appeared to spend an average of two hours watching TV on weekdays, before and after school and late in the evening, and three or more hours at weekends. They watched TV programmes designed for children and for general audience and were viewing a lot of visual images therefore. Gunter & McAleer (1990) explain that the reason TV viewing occupies such a large proportion of children's free time is because it satisfies their need to be entertained, informed, have company, relax, fill in time, escape from everyday realities, and for self-identification. These children appeared to prefer television to other visual culture genres. They elaborated on this by mentioning favourite animated cartoons, sitcoms, social dramas and soap operas. Freedman & Schuler (2002) explain that visual images from TV programmes are deliberately designed to attract and keep children's attention with the use of bright colours, fast alternation, and specific camera techniques (e.g. quick cuts, zoom, close up, etc). I agree with Buckingham (1993, p.110) that it is likely that the pleasure children gained in watching TV after school or at weekends derived also from a sense of freedom from adult constraints. However, no child mentioned anything that could indicate this.

Imagery from child animated cartoons appeared to have a special significance in these children's lives. They appeared to be fascinated by animated cartoons and identified with specific comic heroes such as *Bugs Bunny*, *Mickey Mouse*, *Ninja Turtles*, *SpongeBob* and *Yo-Gi-Oh*. Theory in the literature has established that children like animated cartoons and comics because of similarities in their everyday speech and the lingo they use and between their fast action and their own way of thinking and behaving. Moreover, they are a source of fun and joy, and provide them with role models with which they identify (Konstantinidou-Semoglou, 1998; Vryzas, 1997; Giroux, 1995; Beraducci, 1971).

Viewing animated cartoon was a 'gendered' activity. When I asked young girls, aged between 6 and 10, to explain their preference for images from *Barbie* and *Disney* movies it was clear they identified with heroines like *Belle*, *Cinderella*, and *Jasmine*. For example, Martina, aged 8, told me that she liked to watch *Disney* animated cartoons with *Minnie Mouse* because 'she dances and dresses up beautifully'. As Änggård (2005) and Wagner-Ott (2002) point out, the appearance and behaviour of these heroines are associated with a desire for longing for something (being beautiful, living a good family life, being chosen by a prince/handsome man) that can make a girl's life feel fulfilled. They also help them learn stereotypical social roles of women. Moreover, as Rogers (1998) explains the 'magic', 'fantasy' and 'romance' that abound in *Barbie* and *Disney* movies, releases girls' imagination and helps them escape reality. The majority of boys, on the other hand, liked animated cartoons with superheroes like *Superman* and *Spiderman*, who use their minds and/or physical strength to resolve conflicts, or characters like *Mickey Mouse*, *Bugs Bunny* and *Donald Duck* with obviously masculine actions and traits. According to Baker (2004, p.14), ways these characters and superheroes are portrayed (as assertive, athletic, tough, brave, dominant and intelligent) contribute to the construction of concepts of 'masculinity' and 'femininity'. I assume that these kinds of animated cartoons and films are deliberately designed to achieve such effects on young audiences because their makers want to promote consumption of certain kinds of paraphernalia (toys, magazines, computer games, etc). It may also be the case that companies like *Mattel Inc* and *Disney*, which Giroux (1995) perceives as 'cultural authorities', try to enculturate children in dominant values, social roles

and ideals, and contribute to reproduction and maintenance of a Western style capitalist culture.

Children's preferences for types of television programme differed depending on age. Younger children, aged between 6 and 9, mentioned watching animated cartoons more than children aged between 10 and 12 who mentioned TV programmes targeted at a general audience. It is probable that as they grow up children become more interested in programmes dealing with real-life situations that inform them about the adult world (Chandler, 1995). Acknowledging to Mirzoeff (1999), the narrative structures of TV series like *Vera sto Dexi* and *Sto Para Pente*, and telenovelas like *Floricienta* and *Esmeralda* offer children complex viewing experiences and introduce them in a different kind of reality that sets aside conventions and the impediments of real life. As Buckingham (2004) suggests, it is probable that children prefer to learn about the adult world from media because it does not instruct them in the same way as their teachers and parents. So, the children aged between 10 and 12 may have valued visual imagery from TV programmes and new media as a learning resource because they offered them important topics for discussion such as human relationships, sex, crime, and violence, which were forbidden at home. Although some children in this research said they talked about episodes of TV series and social dramas with friends it was not possible to confirm this. The school environment, in which the interviews were held, may have affected their responses in the sense that they may have been embarrassed to admit that learned from mass media imagery or talked about issues teachers and parents repress.

The appeal of visual imagery from mass media is associated to a significant degree with consumption and pleasure. Consumerism hinges on looking, watching, viewing, seeing sites, window shopping, surfing the Internet, and other visual processes. So, as Schroeder (2005; 2004) and Sturken & Cartwright (2001) point out, visual experience is a key attribute in consumer behaviour. Although the majority of these children did not speak about consumption per se, it was clear they understood the principles of consumerism because they were able to explain the economic function of advertisements and book illustration.

Efie (11 years): [Talking about advertisements] They put them in magazines so that people buy them (she means the products).

However, only very few children appeared to understand how TV imagery and advertisements influence people to purchase goods. Although they did mention that they bought things they saw in advertisements, or read about in fashion magazines, as expected, no one mentioned consumerism as a reason for preferring visual images.

In contrast, they stressed it was the pleasure derived from viewing visual images that was important for them. In psychoanalytical theory the term ‘visual pleasure’ has been associated with Freudian ideas about boy and girl differentiation (‘castration complex’) or Lacan’s ‘mirror stage’, a period in which infants establish the notion of selfhood through mirroring their body images (Sturken & Cartwright, 2001; Rose, 2001). Here ‘visual pleasure’ refers to pleasure in looking. It was clear from these children’s talk that looking at shop windows, posters hung up on bedroom walls, photographs, paintings, or even TV programmes did give them a feeling of pleasure.

Jessie (11 ½ years): [Explaining why she has posters on her bedroom walls]. Because I like to look at them.

Roundina (11 ½ years): [Explaining why she likes TV programmes] Yes, I like (to watch) TV and when I return from school I watch at three o’clock, for two or three hours.

As Rose (2001), Sturken & Cartwright (2001) and Mirzoeff (1999) all point out, visual pleasure is the subjective effect of visual images related to fantasy and desire. A considerable number of these children appeared to dream about and desire to own objects such as cars and clothes, or wished they had physical appearances, such as *Paparizou*, *Lopez* and *Jolie*’s. They also desired lifestyles that were portrayed in advertisements, TV programmes, and magazines.

Roundina (11 ½ years): I like *Brad Pitt*. Err! Because he has taken part in some movies.
Ah! *Angelina Jolie* is very lucky, what else can I say!!

Efie (11 years): We look at the clothes they [celebrities] wear, or their style and we want to become like them.

The fact that all these role models, life styles, and consumer goods are consistently promoted in mass media productions implies that these children were being directed to articulate their dreams and desires this way, through looking at certain kinds of images. There is a strong

relationship, therefore, between children's desires, the visual world and mass media especially because the latter target at consumer's psyche. It was not clear whether these children understood that visual images communicate multiple meanings that invoke cultural codes, values, and beliefs. I assume that when they looked at them they also looked at relations between things and themselves. For example, looking at celebrities' lifestyles as represented in mass media images and comparing them with their own lives probably generated aspirations or dreams of how they themselves wanted to be in the future.

4.2.3 Bodily Response and Aesthetic Experience

Aesthetic theory long ago pointed out that aesthetic experience is linked to aesthetic pleasure and also to judgement and taste. For Immanuel Kant aesthetic experience was 'an autonomous realm free from materialistic and utilitarian interests' (cited in Duncum, 2005a, p.11). He defined it as disinterested and pure, and argued that the pleasure derived from it turns into a heightened feeling of satisfaction (cited in Efland, 2004). It has been argued by him that mind rather than the senses plays a central role in such experience. A few children in this research said they 'liked' to look at and admired nature (sunsets, the sky, and trees) and/or artworks. 'I like to look at many things. But I mostly like to look at the sky when it is blue and has few clouds' (Mirto, 9 years). 'I like paintings, because they are beautiful; artists make very nice paintings' Ilias, 10 years). However, it was not clear whether looking at nature and artworks gave them a sense of pleasure, peace, and/or satisfaction. As Csikszentmihalyi (1990) and Beardsley (1982) have pointed out, it is the sense of visual delight, release from everyday concerns, relaxation and wholeness that distinguishes aesthetic from flow experiences, which involve emotions generated by immersion and involvement in activities like playing video games or watching TV. Although these children could not explain what exactly they sensed, I gained the impression that nature and works of art did have the sensory, emotional and intellectual qualities required for an aesthetic experience as described by Western philosophers like Kant and Beardsley.

For the rest of the children, who said they 'liked' visual images from TV programmes, wrestling, cars, shopping malls, and athletic events, aesthetic experience was linked rather to bodily pleasure than heightened delight. According to Duncum (1999; 2005) and

Shusterman (2004; 2006), everyday aesthetic experiences are associated more with materialistic, utilitarian purposes and bodily sensations than ‘disinterested delight’. Duncum (2005a), Stanley (2002) and Shusterman (2006) use the terms ‘embodied experience’, ‘haptic experience’, and ‘somaesthetics’ to describe the everyday aesthetic experience that results from responses to visual culture products. The fact that visual culture products are typically designed to appeal to more than one sensory system increase the bodily sensations and ways in which a person engages with them. I gained the impression from these children’s talk that watching TV programmes, athletic events and films, or reading a magazine was an activity that offered them pleasure because they were engaged emotionally.

Participation and engagement are key qualities in everyday aesthetic experience according to Duncum (2005a), Shusterman (2006) and Stanley (2002). The immense pleasure the boys in this research seemed to gain from watching *Smack Down* wrestling, or movies with *Jan Claude Van Dam* implied engagement of both body and mind.

Mohamed (10 ½ years): [Talking about *Smack Down*] They are people called like this and they fight, they box and hit each other with chairs and swords.

Christopher (10 years): And they hit them with their heads [He shows me how they do it].

As Kellner (1995) points out, the aesthetic experience these kinds of programmes and films offer is fragmentary and transitory. In *Smack Down* wrestling the use of camera angles, cutting, sound, and especially the speaker’s tone of voice makes for a highly intense, fascinating and seductive spectacle that is likely to have captured these boys’ interest and raised their levels of adrenaline. Looking, therefore, was associated with feeling and emotion.

Some children mentioned that they watched TV so as to forget school lessons. For example, ten-year-old Elpida said: ‘We just watch TV series just to forget the lessons’. Others appeared to get pleasant experiences when watching TV programmes. These kinds of aesthetic experiences did not seem to be disinterested or pure but pleasurable and amusing. Christi, 9 ½ years, said: ‘I like to watch animated cartoons. I like to watch funny stories on TV’. Thea, aged 10 ½, said: ‘I like to watch *Sto Para Pente*, because it is fun’. Similarly,

children who watched soap operas and telenovelas like *Anipotaktes Kardies (Rebelde Way)*, *Esmeralda*, *Floricienta* or *Erotas (Love) Extra Large*, and TV series like *Sto Para Pente* and *Tha Vreis to Daskalo Sou*, appeared to take satisfaction from their emotional involvement in the plot lines. From their talk it was clear that this satisfaction was subjective and personalised because each of them appeared to emphasise different scenes or qualities that aroused them emotionally.

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| Mary (11 year-old): | [Talking about Greek TV series <i>Sto Para Pente</i>]. I like to watch <i>Sto Para Pente</i> because it has action. |
| Thea (10 ½ years): | I like to watch <i>Sto Para Pente</i> because it has fun. |
| Peggy (11 years): | I like to watch <i>Sto Para Pente</i> , because when you think something is going to happen something else is happening instead. |

Their remarks were consistent with Csikszentmihaly (1990), Giroux (1995), and Duncum's (1999; 2005a) claim that viewing visual images from popular culture gives children opportunities to become emotionally involved, escape from everyday concerns, and locate themselves in a fantasy world that reflects their hidden desires and interests.

According to Kant (1952), aesthetic judgement involves sensory discrimination that is not only linked to the capacity of pleasure but also to reflective contemplation. The children in this research appeared to be able to discriminate between pleasant and unpleasant visual images but could not give specific explanations for their aesthetic preferences for certain TV programmes, animated cartoons, athletic events and book illustrations. Their judgements of visual images from popular culture were based on criteria like beauty, entertainment, humour, fun, adventure and suspense. They did not mention negative effects like disgust, pretentiousness or boredom probably because I asked them only why they liked certain kinds of visual images. The analysis of interview data suggested that their judgements were based on sensory and emotional responses to visual images.

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| Athina (12 years): | I like <i>Sto Para Pente</i> , I watch it every Monday at 10.30 because it has fun and it is different [she means from other TV series] ...& I like it because it has suspense and they say some funny words. |
|--------------------|---|

The data also indicated that consciously or unconsciously they had established certain criteria they employed to value an image, TV programme, or film. According to Sturken &

Cartwright (2001, p 48), the value people ascribe to images that determines what makes them pleasing or unpleasing for them depend, to some extent, upon cultural assumptions or shared concepts. It is probable that these children when they criticised films and movies in peer talk they developed and confirmed criteria for valuing images. However, it was not possible to identify what these criteria were because their talk was too general and unspecific.

The children in this research frequently used the words ‘beautiful’ and ‘nice’ to explain their aesthetic preferences for TV programmes, window displays in shopping malls, fine art works and the natural environment.

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| Fanis (7 years): | [Talking about images in TV] I like them because they move nicely. |
| Ismini (9 years): | [Talking about children’s TV programmes] I like them because they have beautiful colours. |
| Christine (11 years): | [Talking about TV series <i>Anipotaktes Kardies</i> , <i>To Kafe tis Haras</i> , and <i>10 Lepta Kirigma</i>] I like them because they have nice story, Miss. & I like their plot line. |

Judging by their talk, these adjectives related to the formal elements of visual images, subject matter, or narrative of TV programmes. As such, automobiles were ‘beautiful’ because of their design, animated cartoons were ‘nice’ because of their colours, a painting depicting a landscape was ‘beautiful’ because of its subject matter and the TV series *Tha Vreis to Daskalo Sou* and *10 Minutes Kirigma* was ‘nice’ because of narrative. Although the children did not mention sound, music or wording that accompanies television imagery, I assume these would have influenced their preferences. As Duncum (2004) points out, dialogue, sound and music in TV programmes, films, or even video games play a crucial role in how people make meaning of them. The fact that these children did not refer to them is probably a result of the way I questioned them when I designed the interview schedule. I considered it too difficult and time consuming to investigate the multimodality of visual culture genres so I did not plan any questions about this. On reflection, this was probably an omission because I might have gained more information about children’s preferences and understanding of visual images this way.

Regarding the use of the adjectives ‘beautiful’ and ‘nice’, it was not possible to determine their meaning for individual children because their responses were so brief. But in certain cases notions of feminine beauty were constructed from models provided by popular culture. Girls, aged between 10 and 12, appeared to perceive a woman who had *Jolie’s* skinny shape, *Paparizou’s* lips, and *Lopez’s* face as beautiful. For example, Niki, aged 11, considered the Greek singer *Elena Paparizou* beautiful and wanted to have ‘her hair, body, and lips’. Although girls, aged between 6 and 9, acknowledged that *Barbie*, *Mini Mouse*, and *Cinderella* were beautiful they did not point out specific physical attributes related to body shape or hairstyle. They appeared to relate beauty to their clothes apparel and dancing and singing skills. For example, Angelica, aged 8 ½, and Irene, aged 8, told me that *Barbie* was beautiful ‘because she wears nice dresses’; whereas Martina and Nastasia, aged 8, pointed out that *Mini Mouse* is beautiful because ‘she can dance very nicely’. According to Giroux (1995) and Blair & Shalmon (2005), corporate bodies like *Mattel Inc* and *Disney* set standards of beauty through the production of animated versions of fairy tales, such as *Cinderella*, *Snowwhite*, and *Rapunzel*, dolls, popular magazines, and advertisements. This probably explains why these girls appeared to be adopting certain models of beauty and desired to become look like them.

The children’s preference for mass media and popular culture genres was informed by the criteria of ‘fun’, ‘amusement’ and ‘entertainment’. The children in this research used expressions like ‘they made us laugh’, ‘were amusing’ and ‘having fun’ to emphasise the humorous and entertaining nature of animated cartoons and TV programmes they enjoyed. Gunter & McAleer (1999) and Rogge (2003) understand entertainment as a primary aim of TV programmes and films. They deliberately set out to provide viewers with material that will enhance their fantasies and fulfil their desire and need to escape the real world in stories that push back the boundaries of reality so as to release imagination (Giroux, 1995; Rogge, 2003; Hake, 2001). Because they offer merriment and euphoria, they can alter bad moods. This may explain why the children in this research said they felt happier after viewing visual images on TV. For example, Elie, aged 9 ½, told me that she liked to watch *Looney Tunes*, especially episodes with *Tweety* because ‘it has fun and I like that; I am happy at the end’. It

appears they appreciated the way animated films and TV programmes prolonged positive mood and laughter.

Some of the children mentioned they liked TV series, such as *Sto Para Pente*, *Barbie* movies, films, like *Harry Potter*, animated cartoons, like *Ninja Turtles*, and video games because they offered them a sense of excitement and a relief from boredom.

Angela (9 years): I like movies. I like to watch, err! I like to watch *Barbie* because her movies are with adventure.

Savvas (11 years): I like a game called *God of War*. It's a game about war that you kill giants.

This is consistent with the claim by Gunter & McAleer (1990) and Rogge (2004) that children prefer visual images that stimulate their imagination and feedback their natural curiosity about what is going to happen next. The television drama and fiction series, soap operas, games and reality shows they liked probably aroused these children emotionally. It is not coincidental therefore that they described *Barbie* movies and *Ninja Turtles* as 'adventurous', and *Sto Para Pente* as having 'suspense'.

I gain the impression from what children said that engaging with events and characters of TV programmes and films not only fulfilled their need for mental and emotional stimulation but also offered them a means of exploring gender roles and shaping their identities. Boys and girls appreciated qualities like suspense, action and adventure differently when they talked about media violence, or watching scenes in which heroes and heroines avoid dangerous situations or evil forces. Boys in this research, for example, were fascinated by wrestling shows and violent films including fights with weapons and swords, or battles against monsters, like the *Orcs* in film *The Lord of the Rings*.

Christopher (10 years): I mostly like to watch films with, what's his name? VanDam...& He fights in several films with dragons.

Savvas ((11 years): [Talking about favourite heroes/heroines] I like *Aragorn* and *Legolas*. I like *Aragorn* because he has a big sword and kills fast and *Legolas* because his good finding his target.

The girls, on the other hand, interpreted adventure differently. Those girls aged between 6 and 10 associated it with stories in *Barbie* movies and Disney fairy tales in which heroines

in danger were saved by a good prince. Girls, aged between 10 and 12, appreciated the ‘adventure’ and ‘suspense’ of social dramas in which main characters overcame difficult situations and faced up robbers or killers.

- Nasia (8 years): [Talking about fairy tale *Snow-white*] I like it because her stepmother sent a hunter to kill her and take out her heart and bring it to her stepmother.
- Christine (11 years): [She describes an adventurous scene in TV series *Sto Para Pente*]. The bad guy shot *Zoumpoulia*:: and she went, she went to the hospital::, and there the bad guy pretended, pretended that he was her son...

As Gunter & McAleer (1999), Rogge (1999) and Hake (2001) point out, boys and girls chose what to watch with different criteria and appreciated ‘adventure’ and ‘violence’ in TV programmes and films differently because they are driven by different initial motives (exploration of gender identity) and have different individual psychological characteristics. Gotz (2003) explains that characters in TV programmes and films, at a symbolic level, project children’s experiences desires and hopes. This probably implies that the young girls in this research were hoping probably to find some help in future problems by somebody stronger than them, or to face difficult life situations with courage and bravery like *Barbie*; whereas boys were looking at strong, fearless characters who can win in battles because they wanted to act like them in similar situations in real life.

4.2.4 Impact of Visual Culture on Everyday Activities

The group interviews confirmed that popular visual culture dominated and had a great impact on these children’s lives. This was apparent in the way they talked about their conversations with peers, how they decorated their bedrooms, the themes of their drawings/paintings, favourite heroes/heroines, and play activities.

The children in this research clearly appropriated information from television programmes such as gossip shows and TV series, films like *Harry Potter* and athletic events, usually football matches of Greek *Super League*, during peer talk. Their peer discussions took the form of sharing what they had seen on television, retelling episodes of TV comedies, soap operas and social dramas, and critiquing TV personas, actors and social events.

- Vicky (8 years): When I watch some good TV series, if they are really good, I talk about them with my friends at break- time, or when we go to play, I tell them then what I watched.
- Chrysie (9 ½ years): I discuss with my friends when I watch [TV gossip shows] about singers, actors/actresses, and about films.
- Mario (12 years): We discuss about football, about goals, who is first in the super league, who is second, who is third, who is fourth.

As Fingerson (1999) points out, children use their visual and aesthetic experiences as a basis for collective interaction and talk. It is probable that these children discussed the characters of television and animated cartoon programmes because they offered them models of human behaviour to be criticised, emulated, and talked about. For example Claudia, aged 11, said: ‘I discuss with my brother about animated cartoons and roles we play from them and about being like them’. This statement is consistent with Fingerson (1999) and Kellner’s (1995) claim that the symbols, plots and myths in films, TV dramas and visual images enable children in post-industrial societies share a common cultural experience. This implies that they affect social cohesion as they project and promote dominant values, ideals and beliefs.

Fascination with TV series or identification with their main characters was another reason for discussing them with friends. Some girls, for example, who were fascinated with a love story of a secondary teacher with one of his female students in the TV series *Tha Vreis to Daskalo Sou*, told me they retold episodes and tried to predict what would happen next debating the likelihood of various possibilities.

- Georgia (10 ½ years): My friend and I watch a TV series every Wednesday, *Tha Vreis to Daskalo Sou*, and then on Thursday we talk about it, about the part we liked best, and we discuss about what will happen next.

Hake (2001) explains that excitement and delight TV series bring about are elements of fascination. So, it is likely that these children wanted to share their excitement or delight with their peers as soon as possible after viewing favourite TV programmes. It is also possible that discussing TV imagery with peers contributed to their understanding of life matters, like human relationships, social justice and altruism. As Fingerson (1999) and Änggård (2005) point out, peer interaction helps children make sense of what they watch

especially about cultural messages in films and TV programmes. Although these children did not mention any messages their favourite TV series and films carried, it is reasonably safe to assume that peer discussion may have helped them to share interpretations.

The interview data also showed that mass media and popular culture imagery not only was a source for peer talk but enabled children make decisions on interior design. The children participating in this research appeared to choose posters, religious images, family photographs, and their own drawings to decorate their bedroom walls.

Vasilios (10 ½ year): I have posters with *Harry Potter*. I am a *Harry Potter* fan! & I have one with *Michael Jackson*. & Footballers. & Err, err! and posters with cars.

Yugin (8 ½ years): [I have] Err! Family photographs and photographs of myself, several things, several paintings I have made.

Lampis (11 years): I have Jesus' icons and photographs of myself...

Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton (1981) explain that people deliberately choose objects that reflect their tastes and personalities for decorating personal spaces. In that sense children who are in an on-going process of self-definition and construction of identity use, work and play with a variety of cultural symbols, visual images and artefacts in order to create a sense of self (Brown *et al*, 1994; Grauer, 2002). It is also possible that these children chose images because they conveyed certain cultural messages (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981). For example, the posters of famous people probably operated as role models, in the sense that they revealed social goals and expectations like gaining money, achieving social status, success, and fame, that were connected with children's fantasies and desires. They may be also helping them to grow up by reminding them what they might want to be as adults (i.e. a singer or footballer).

These children admitted that they were attracted to media celebrities both from Greece and abroad, including *Brad Pit*, *Elena Papparizou*, *Angelina Jolie*, *Candy Girls*, *Mihalis Hatziyiannis* and lots others. They explained that they chose posters of those celebrities to decorate their bedrooms because they admired their 'talent' or 'good looks'. For example, Marian, aged 12, told me that she had a poster of Greek singer *Hatziyiannis* because she

liked 'his voice and style'. Giles & Maltby (2004, p.814) explain that children's identification with celebrities, heroes, or cartoon characters may reflect a gradual transition from parental attachment towards autonomy. The tendency of children aged 10-12 in this research to decorate their bedroom walls with posters depicting actors, singers, and athletes suggests that they had started to shift from parental identification and were looking at media figures who offered them a variety of possible selves to try out. According to McDonald (2000) and Boden (2006), the wealthy and glamorous lifestyles of 'stars' in show business promoted by mass-media as somewhat out of the ordinary, intrigue children's imagination and stimulate a desire to be like them. I assume that their attraction to and identification with celebrities was fuelled by the desire to bring about change in their lives, especially regarding money, fame, and social status and provided them with options for developing gender identity. However, it is not unlikely that comparison with idolised media figures, which set standards for appearance, behaviour, respect and recognition, played some role in children's development of self-worth and esteem.

The interview data revealed that the children who decorated their bedrooms with religious images interacted with them when they used them for prayer and meditation. This is consistent with the idea that analysing the visual images and objects children use for bedroom decoration yields useful information about their values, aspirations and activities (Brown *et al*, 1994). It was clear that they understood these religious images as signs or symbols of Orthodox Christian faith probably because they saw them being used in devotional practices and participated in rituals. They also appeared to cherish photographs that had personal significance. 'I have a photograph of when my brother and I were young. I have them as memoir' (Hara, 11 years). This confirms Duncum's (2003a) claim that photographs are among the most prized people's possessions and are usually selected as decorative objects because they preserve memories of significant events in people's lives and are a source of emotional arousal.

The children in this research who used their drawings/paintings for decorative purposes probably associated them with life experiences or past events as well. Vicky, aged 8, pointed out that she put her own drawings/paintings on the wall 'to remember when I made them and

I write the date on them'. Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton (1981, p.100) explain that people as they grow older they use material like photographs and artefacts as memoirs for past events and experiences that had some significance to them (marriage, birthdays, holidays, etc) in order to preserve a sense of continuity of the self. These children used drawings/paintings as well as photographs not just for decorative purposes but also to remind them who they were and what they did at certain period of time.

Their remarks about the subject matter of their drawings/paintings suggested they were stimulated by nature and the visual culture genres of urban design, architecture, automobile design, magazines, TV programmes, comics and animated cartoons included in the research tool.

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| Sandra (12 years): | I used to draw clothes, but now I have stopped and I do ordinary drawings/paintings, little houses, flowers, things like these. |
| Sebastian (9 ½ years): | [I draw/paint] Heroes, dinosaurs, and many others. Most of them are with heroes. & I watch on TV. |
| Mikis (11 years): | Every evening I have a writing book and I draw/paint cars. |

Many art educators have pointed out that children learn to draw/paint either by imitating graphic representations by adults or by looking at and exploring their everyday environment (Duncum, 1997b; Anning & Ring, 2004; Wilson 1997; Wilson & Wilson 1977). From what they said it appeared that these children drew/painted both what they saw in the real world and in comics and animated cartoons. In particular, they said they tended to draw and paint typical everyday subjects and explore topics such as athletics, transport vehicles, nature, the human figure, and built environment. As Anning & Ring (2004, p.26) point out children's spontaneous drawings and paintings are a tool for understanding their life experiences of places, people, and things as well as 'big ideas' like good and evil, danger and adventure. The children talked about both drawings/paintings they made at home and school because I did not make it clear which ones I meant. This made it difficult to understand if they talked about spontaneous drawing/paintings or not. So, children in this research may observed and then drew/painted 'houses', 'trees', 'forests', 'the sea', 'the sun and the sky', 'people' and 'children', or may have been told to do this at school. Moreover, because I asked children to

describe their subject matter of drawings/paintings, it is not possible to discuss stylistic characteristics in this research.

The interview data suggested that they imitated their favourite animated cartoons, such as *Barbie*, *SpongeBob Squarepants*, *Spiderman*, and *Batman*, to draw/paint similar figures and landscapes. So, subject matter of visual representations traced in popular media such as comics, cartoons, and computer games seemed to play an influential role in providing these children with models and ideas to be explored through drawing and painting. For example, 6-year-old Joanna, said: 'I draw/paint ballerinas and scenes that I have watched on children's TV programmes'. This correlates with Toku (2001; 2004) and Wilson's (1997; 1999) theory that children imitate comic/cartoon characters in order to draw/paint stories that help them symbolically act out social roles and fulfil their life expectations. Although it was clear that these children drew/painted favourite cartoon characters, they did not explain why they chose these subjects. So, it is not clear if it really is the case that depicting such kinds of characters helps children understand society and its values or decide what traits to cultivate or discount is correct as the literature on visual culture and children's drawings suggests.

Analysing interview data showed that the girls tended to draw/paint houses and female human figures wearing fashion clothes, while boys tended to draw/paint sport themes, action scenes with battleships and aeroplanes as well as superheroes like *Batman* and *Superman*.

Adele (7 years): I watch *Barbie* on TV, I look her pictures on the book, and I draw/paint her.

Georgie (7 ½ years): I draw/paint *Superman*, *SpongeBob Squarepants*, many things.

The subject matter of girls' drawings/paintings appeared to be influenced by fairy-tales, *Barbie* movies, and fashion magazines. The boys, on the other hand, imitated comic books and animated cartoon programmes and visual subjects associated with power, physical action, and machismo. This is consistent with ideas in theory in art education about gender differentiation in children's drawings/paintings. For example, Duncum (1997b) and Toku (2004) have suggested that children select art subjects in accordance with what others regard as appropriate for their gender. As Anning and Ring (2004), Toku (2001) and

Wilson (1997) all point out, mass-media resources provide children with gendered ideas of what they want to be. These children represented in their drawings/paintings the traditional gender stereotypes they conformed to and appropriated from popular and mass media culture imagery. This probably enabled them to explore self-concepts, especially gender identity, and/or visions of future self.

It was clearly the case that the children in this research identified with superheroes from popular culture (*Batman*, *Spiderman*, and *Superman*), animated cartoon characters (*Mickey Mouse* and *Bugs Bunny*) film heroes (*Zorro*, *Harry Potter*, and *Gantalf*), or Disney movies heroines (*Belle*, *Jasmine*, and *Rapunzel*). They emphasised both their physical or mental attributes to explain why they liked them.

Mohamed (10 ½ years): I like *Superman*. I like him very much. & Because he has good power; he has got lasers, and destroys things like this [he shows us what *Superman* does].

Irene (8 years): I like *Barbie* because she is very beautiful.

These remarks are consistent with previous research findings that have shown that children favour heroes and heroines with the physical and mental characteristics of ‘beauty’, ‘intelligence’, ‘strength’, ‘braveness’, ‘wisdom’, ‘sensitivity’ and ‘goodness’, or those who possess supernatural powers (Marsh, 2000; Platsidou, 2001; Galani, & Kyrides, 2005). It is probable that children cling to, identify themselves with and imitate such heroes/heroines because they do not look like ordinary people (Galani & Kyrides, 2005). Heroes and heroines, therefore, as role models play a crucial role in children’s identity construction and socialisation.

It is possible that the large number of boys and a few girls in this research valued attributes of strength and power probably because they wished to gain some control over their environment. For example, Yiota, aged 11, said: ‘I like *Spiderman* because he throws web, jumps high, helps people, and arrests those who stole from them. Also, Spyros, aged 8 ½, said: ‘I like *Superman* because he can lift things, and saves people’. Marsh (2000) argues that it is the sense of being powerless under parental and adult control that drives children to identify with superheroes. These children repeatedly mentioned the way superheroes and

movie-heroes overcome difficulties and save people because they are strong and clever. They understood them as characters that had managed to gain control over their own lives and the worlds they inhabited. A few also stressed the fact that it is easier for these heroes to fight the evil because they wear masks and hide their faces.

Alexander (10 ½ years):	I like <i>Spiderman</i> because he saves people and he does not reveal his face though everybody knows about him.
Zac (7 ½ years):	I like <i>Batman</i> because he fights the bad people; he escapes police, because police wants to arrest him; he helps people.

It appeared that for these boys surpassing the limits of the law and social order was not a criminal action because it produced a beneficial outcome (saving people). It is probable that through their identification with heroes/heroines they explored ideas like good/bad and right/wrong that Marsh (2000) and Davies (1997a; 2003) call ‘opposed extremes’. It is probable that doing this helps them make their own sense of the world and adopt values and social mores and shape their behaviour accordingly.

A finding from the interview data about favourite heroes/heroines was that the stereotyped version of masculinity as strong, clever, decided, intelligent, and assertive offered by superheroes and/or movie and TV characters, like Zorro and Robin Hood, was especially appealing to boys and a few girls. The majority of young girls, aged between 6 and 10, identified more with female animated cartoon characters like *Mini Mouse* and *Lola Bunny* and/or Disney heroines like *Belle*, *Jasmine*, *Rapunzel*, and *Cinderella*. The girls in this study in their minds they valued characters who were kind-hearted, honest, gentle and benevolent and appreciated beauty as well as ‘goodness’. They favoured heroines who resembled fashion models but also overcame difficulties and took risks in order to save family members or friends. For example, 7-year-old Adele said: ‘I like *Lola Bunny* because she is clever like *Bugs Bunny*. Dina, aged 8, said: ‘I like *Princess Sissy* because she has courage and never gives in’. It may be the case that the lack of interest they showed in the superhero narratives is a consequence of ways in which women are portrayed in these films and TV programmes. According to Marsh (2000) and Tavin & Anderson (2003), women in such films and programmes are portrayed as evil, autonomous, physically unattractive persons, or as ‘beautiful, good girls’ who are not brave and clever but receive romantic attention. It is also probable that these girls needed to look at female role models to construct their gender

identity and that these role models offered them a complex but stereotyped version of femininity, which they adopted. *Disney* films, for example, contain metaphors of women as traditional housewives and as objects of male desire and as such provide young girls with narrow models of gender and social roles (Wagner-Ott, 2002). On the other hand, *Mattel Inc* animated films portray *Barbie* as a beautiful, intelligent, honest, courageous and active woman who undertakes risks to save family or self and is rewarded at the end by marrying a prince. As Änggård (2005) point out, stories about princesses who meet and marry princes reveal girls' unconscious longing for something or somebody else to fulfil their lives. Although it was not clear from these girls' talk how such role models shaped their expectations, it might be the case that they formed their ideas about how they wanted to lead their lives in the future especially regarding appearance, relationships with males, and attitudes.

Finally, there was evidence from the interviews that these children used the materials visual culture offers to create narratives for role-play. The children in this study appeared to engage in role-play, borrow ideas from mass media and popular culture, imitate heroes and heroines and act out scenes from TV programmes, animated cartoons and films.

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| Alekos (8 years): | My friends and I act out <i>Ninja Turtles</i> ; I am pretending that I am one of them and we fight the bad guys. |
| Martina (8 years): | I invite some friends of mine and we play; we dance and sing like <i>Minnie Mouse</i> . |

As Singer & Singer's (1981) point out, children rehearse material from popular visual culture in order to learn about themselves and their environments. Although it was not clear what these children learned from role-playing it is probable that they were exploring gender possibilities that probably enabled them negotiate and confirm the role models they had learned by visual characters in cartoons, films and TV programmes. I agree with Marsh, (1999, p.119) that they might use material from visual culture for role-play because they were closer to their everyday lives or they were more interesting than material from schoolbooks.

4.2.5 Understanding the Impact of Visual Culture on Identity Construction

Art educators who write about visual culture claim it helps children learn about, understand, and place themselves within the techno-capitalist societies which the majority of them now inhabit (Kellner, 1995; Duncum, 2003; Tavin & Anderson, 2003; Flood & Bamford, 2006). It also plays a significant role in the construction of cultural ideas about lifestyle, self-image, and self-improvement (Sturken & Cartwright, 2001; Brown *et al.*, 1994; Schroeder & Borgerson, 2002). The children's talk in this research confirmed these ideas in that visual images from popular culture inspired their drawing/painting and role-play, provided them with resources for bedroom decoration and role models to appropriate. However, their understanding of visual culture as a source for this kind of learning was limited.

The majority appeared to equate 'learning' with 'receiving information'. Fotoula, aged 8, said: 'I learn from films about animals that I don't know; I see how forests are in other places'. Roula, aged 11, said: 'We learn from TV News about the war in Iraq, that they don't have water to drink, and that thousands were killed'. This is probably why they talked about things they had learned from the TV News, the weather forecasts, documentaries, and books. It may be the case that children at this stage of cognitive development do not understand that visual images are inherently didactic. Freedman (1997a) and Freedman & Wood (1999) explain that this happens because children's initial response to visual images is emotional. This theory is supported by the statement of a few children that people do not learn anything from TV but merely watch it as a pastime. For example Ilias, aged 10, said: 'No we don't learn anything; we just watch TV to pass the time and to forget lessons'. As Parsons (1987, p.3) point out people's understanding of 'what paintings/visual images should be like, what kinds of qualities are inherent in them, and how they can be judged' may be affected by the social expectations they have about them. Similarly, the expectation these children had about the purposes of visual imagery may have affected their perceptions of its didactic or other roles. Throughout the interviews, they appeared to associate visual imagery from popular culture only with pleasure, fun and entertainment. Sebastian, aged 9 ½, said: 'I like to watch children's TV programmes because they are entertaining, they make us laugh'. It is also probable that they associated the learning process specifically with acquiring knowledge through formal instruction. This kind of instruction can be considered strict and unpleasant

compared to ways visual culture genres, especially TV, instruct children. Visual imagery from popular culture does not instruct or teach in the way teachers and parents do, but it entertains them, fulfils their dreams and desires, and helps them escape from reality at the same time. The fact that children equated learning with formal schooling and did not recognise informal modes of learning might be also a consequence of age immaturity.

The prompts I gave to children about learning from visual culture during the interviews did influence the discussion. Most of the children repeated and extended the prompts about changing ways of thinking and social behaviour by giving examples. So, they mentioned learning behaviour patterns, like being polite and not being miserly, verbal patterns of slang, and fashion trends. They also named specific TV dramas and telenovelas, animated cartoons and magazines in this regard.

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| Leon (9 years): | From <i>Timon and Bumpa</i> you can learn not to be selfish, and other things but in a nice way. |
| Catherine (11 years): | I learn from <i>Consatntinou and Elenis</i> how to make jokes on my brother. |
| Fotoula (8 years): | From the magazine <i>Super Katerina</i> I learn about what to wear and how to combine my clothes. |

Only a few children mentioned that observing peoples' characters and behaviour in TV series helps viewers understand themselves, correct their mistakes and become better people. Twelve-year-old Sandra said: 'When we watch that someone has a similar personality to ours, we watch how people who are close to him react; this helps to understand some mistakes I have made and change them'. Also some of their comments implied that learning about future life was possible from TV social dramas and was important because it gave them clues as to what their lives might be like as adults. Athina, aged, 12, said: 'You learn how your life might end up; for example you may meet some people that will change your life'.

The children's talk revealed that they were aware of didactic, religious, commercial, utilitarian, aesthetic and decorative functions of visual culture genres, such as religious images, book illustration, fashion shows and crafts. However, no child mentioned these functions with input to learning from visual culture. Moreover, no one referred to the artist

or maker's intentions. Younger children appeared to have more difficulty than older ones finding examples to justify their responses to questions about learning. 'I watch *Bugs Bunny* and because he is clever I take ideas from him' (Nicos, 7 ½ years). This is not surprising given that Freedman & Wood's (1999) research into high school students' critical responses to visual culture has shown that children, aged between 12 and 15, find it difficult to grasp the influential role visual imagery has on constructing a self-concept. Given that even high school students find it difficult to understand the impact of visual culture on identity construction it is likely that these primary age children needed more formal instruction and guidance on this matter. These responses also suggested that they found it difficult to understand the notions of 'self-concept' and 'identity'.

I gained the impression from what these children said that they were either unaware of or unable to explain how and to what extent visual culture contributed to and affected their perceptions of themselves, others and the world. Not one child, for example, talked about any values promoted by TV programmes they had consciously adopted, or how advertisements for a certain product had shaped their taste. It is probable they did not know how to negotiate the messages visual images communicate and, therefore, consumed them uncritically. I agree with Freedman (1997a) and Taylor & Ballengee-Morris (2003) that students should be given opportunities in art lessons to interpret and deconstruct the visual images they encounter in their everyday lives because this would enable them to acquire critical consciousness. It was clear from this research that if this is the case then Greek art education does not yet provide students with the conceptual tools they need to understand hidden multiple meanings of visual images. Although educators like Matsagouras (1998) and Trilianos (1997) have stressed the need for primary education in Greece to put more effort into developing children's analytical and critical thinking skills, there was little evidence of this in the children's responses. In conclusion, interview data confirmed my initial hypothesis that there is a need to reform Greek art education to integrate analysis and interpretation of visual and material culture in the art curriculum in order to help students become more critical and discriminating consumers.

4.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Analysis of the data indicated that the primary age children who participated in the group interviews had access to and were aware of a variety of visual culture genres. They experienced visual culture both directly and indirectly. These children appeared to be familiar with most of the visual culture genres included in the research tool, could recognise the images and had tacit knowledge about the function and use of most genres. However, they could not name and classify all genres. Their lack of familiarity with art education terminology is either a result of their stage of cognitive development, or the failure of Greek art education to fulfil the national curriculum aims about learning art specific vocabulary in lessons.

The children in the research gave equal weight to visual experience from human-designed objects and sites in the real world, especially the built environment, and from simulated ones like TV programmes and animated cartoons. Their remarks about looking at the built environment suggested that it has a ubiquitous presence with particular significance in their lives because it perhaps offered them intense multisensory experiences. The fact they talked only about the buildings, shops and settings they looked at from their home windows and when they went to or returned from school indicates that they probably perceived it as a visual culture genre. Given that the built environment had a personal meaning for them, I concluded that there is a need to give children more opportunities in art lessons in Greece to examine and reflect on their visual and aesthetic experiences of and interaction with it, and to explore ways it bonds people together and how changes in it affect its inhabitants.

Group interviews revealed that these children's everyday lives were saturated by visual images from popular and mass media culture, especially from TV. Their strong preference for television images over other kinds of visual images was related to pleasure and the emotional arousal they derived from watching TV programmes. Fascination with plots and identification with characters in animated cartoons and TV series made for general audiences were the main reasons these children gave to explain why they liked them. The dominance of TV images in children's lives suggested that it is a medium that mediates with the world as it provides them with representations of reality and enables them make sense of

it. Television programmes permitted them to witness and get informed about events occurring miles away (for example the Iraqi war), and also allowed them to acquire knowledge about topics like human relationships, sex, and crime. The interview data did not reveal whether these children were able to question messages about values, beliefs, and norms communicated by the TV programmes they said they watched. This probably happened because they needed more instruction for this.

Analysis of interview data indicated that these children's aesthetic experiences were associated with materialistic, utilitarian purposes and bodily sensations. Participation, engagement and emotional involvement were the main characteristics of these aesthetic experiences. It appears they had, consciously or unconsciously, established criteria for valuing the images they looked at everyday life. Pleasure, beauty, entertainment, adventure and suspense were the key qualities they looked for in certain TV programmes, animated cartoons, athletic events and book illustrations. Although it was not always possible to determine the meaning of adjectives they used like 'beautiful' and 'nice', there was evidence that their judgements were related to formal elements of visual images and plot lines of TV series. On the other hand, it was apparent that excitement and emotional stimulation and arousal were associated to adventurous or amusing TV programmes and films.

It was clear that visual culture had a significant impact on these children's everyday activities such as peer talk, drawing/painting, and role-play. The data about peer group conversation revealed that they shared their visual and aesthetic experiences with each other frequently. Celebrity gossip, athletic events, and TV series were among the main topics they discussed with peers. The data also revealed that these children used resources from visual culture to decorate private spaces at home and in particular bedroom walls. They deliberately chose visual images with personal significance for them (posters, religious images, family photographs and own drawings/paintings) for decoration. It was also clear that they used resources offered by visual culture genres (animated cartoons, architecture, book illustration and magazines) to explore themes such as athletics, transport, nature, the human figure, and built environment in their drawings/paintings. Their talk also suggested that they used resources from TV programmes and animated cartoons for imaginative role-

play. They identified especially with heroes and heroines with certain kinds of physical and mental characteristics ('beauty', 'intelligence', 'strength', 'braveness', 'wisdom', 'sensitivity', 'goodness') and were fascinated with TV series that gave them ideas to create their own narratives for role play.

The interview data about children's favourite visual culture genres revealed age differences in preferences for TV programmes. The majority of children, aged between 6 and 10, preferred animated cartoons whereas the older ones liked TV series made for adults or general audience. Gender differences were also detected in preferences for TV programmes and cartoons and identification with heroes/heroines. The girls preferred *Barbie* and *Disney* movies because they identified with their heroines who were portrayed as 'intelligent', 'beautiful', 'brave' and 'kind-hearted'. Representations of stereotypical attributes for men ('assertive', 'athletic', 'tough', 'brave', 'dominant' and 'intelligent') were especially appealing to boys who were fascinated by violent films, wrestling shows, and anything that included fighting with weapons and swords, and battles with monsters.

Finally, it was clear that children participating in the group interviews had difficulty understanding the impact of visual culture on their own identity construction. They equated 'learning' as such with 'receiving information' from TV, magazines and books. Prompts that I gave to the children suggested that with guidance they were able to extend their thinking and talk about visual culture influences on behaviour patterns, consumer habits, and future expectations. From what these children said it was apparent that they had difficulty in thinking critically and reflecting on their visual and aesthetic experiences and communicating their thoughts about them.

4.4 REFLECTION ON METHOD

At this point, I considered it important to evaluate the design of the group interviews and the visual tool, summarise their strengths and weaknesses and identify its implications for the design of the next part of the research. The visual research tool was developed because it was anticipated that it would help children relax and open up discussion. This was achieved because children seemed to enjoy looking at the visual images. The design and construction

of visual research tool was influenced by the notions that: (i) visual culture is an inclusive term that embraces material artefacts, visual images, time-based media and performances (Walker, 1998; Barnard 1998); (ii) there is a need to expand art education content to include all forms of visual production (Duncum, 2001a, 2002a, 2002b; Freedman 2003b; Heise, 2004). As a result, it included images from a wide range of visual culture genres, which made their presentation difficult, mainly because interview time was limited. As a consequence, children did not have opportunities to discuss each of the genres included in the tool in depth. They were simply asked to identify and name the visual culture genres shown. The presentation of visual images lasted for 5-7 minutes and after that children responded to interview questions without looking at them again. However, it was not possible to determine whether and to what extent the presentation influenced their responses during the rest of the interviews.

Group interviews were found to be appropriate choice of method given the aims of this research. Their strong point was that they gave me an opportunity to gather descriptive information about children's preferences of visual culture and enlist a variety of perspectives on the same questions. They portrayed the situation regarding children's preferences for views and attitudes towards visual culture at a particular point of time across a specific population sample. The way the group interviews were designed, piloted, and conducted facilitated children's willing participation and contribution to discussion, at least for the majority of them. They also took into account ethical considerations such as anonymity and confidentiality and teachers, parents and children were informed about these issues.

However, the 35-45 minutes group interviews did not permit in-depth exploration of the influences of visual culture on children's role play, identifications with heroes/heroines in mass media, choices of bedroom decoration and drawing/painting. Although I tried to encourage all the children to respond to questions, develop and explain their points of view, it was stressful because it seemed there was not enough time to complete the task well. This along with the fact that I worked for eight years as a primary teacher led to a tendency to ask children 'why' questions. According to Powney & Watts (1987) and Kreuger (1994), this may force children to give quick and brief answers. Indeed, children in this research

explained their preferences for visual culture genres and heroes/heroines and choices of interior design very briefly using small sentences.

Regarding researcher bias, I tried not to guide children to give specific, expected answers. However, my prompts, especially in the last question about their understanding of visual culture as a learning source, influenced them. In particular, I mentioned that people can change their behaviour because of the images they see, or they can adopt certain dress style, or life style. The majority of children appeared to agree with these statements and they just brought examples of cases they adopted social behaviour patterns, like not being selfish, which they had previously observed in TV series or animated cartoons. On reflection, I should have phrased the question differently so that children would not need any further help to respond. Moreover, the way I was feeling during an interview – enthusiastic, relaxed, stressed, tired, or drained -- affected the children's behaviour. For example, two interviews were conducted towards the end of the day when I felt tired. These groups were quiet and motionless and discussion was monotonous and uninspired. Perhaps the children felt tired too. Finally, interviewing primary age children, and especially those aged 6-7, proved to be a more difficult task than I expected. Although as a primary school teacher I know how to engage with and moderate children, I was not able to force them to participate and open up discussion. It may be the case that children of this age need more time to be acquainted with an interviewer whom they have not met before and to build a rapport with them. On reflection, I should have organised preliminary meetings with them to get to know each other.

Regarding the presentation of the interview data in chapters 3 and 4, I was aware that oral speech is difficult to transcribe because of its complexity and richness, for example, in terms of variations of pitch and volume and the presence of non-verbal elements, like pauses and sounds indicating hesitations and/or insecurity. Consequently, I tried to make the presentation of the interview data as transparent as possible and to enrich the verbatim quotes by incorporating paralinguistic and non-verbal information. The decision to use the standardised set of conventions developed by Buckingham (1993) and Edwards & Lampert (1993) in order to symbolise and represent the children's tone-of-voice, non-verbal speech

sounds and other information was based on the premise that this technique is systematic, clear, exhaustive, readable and easy to remember (Appendix 10). In hindsight, these conventions were extremely helpful in the way they enabled me to systematically highlight pauses, interrupted, high rising or emphatic speech, utterances, events happening during the interviews, and gestures, laughs, or coughs and to include information about the Greek context. This, thereby, significantly increased the quality of transcription. However, as Cook (1990) and Lapadat and Lindsay (1999) have pointed out transcriptions of interview data are never complete and it was not possible to transcribe every detail of the interaction between the children participating in the group interviews or of what they said.

Translating the interviews and transcriptions from Greek into English for the purposes of data presentation was an additional problem. Although I consulted a bilingual friend, who taught Greek Language in London, we found it difficult to achieve accurate translation because the structure of sentences in Greek language is more flexible and relaxed and there is more use of idiomatic expression. Modifications to vocabulary and word order of sentences were necessary before the transcriptions made sense in English. Whereas this probably influenced the selection and presentation of the interview data and verbatim selection quotes selected for translation I understand them as providing sound evidence of these particular children's attitudes towards, preferences for and views about visual culture and as providing an authentic overview of what was said and expressed.

4.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR SECOND PART OF RESEARCH

The first part of this research was designed to find out:

- (i) which visual culture genres Greek children could identify and name;
- (ii) which ones they looked at most often in their everyday lives;
- (iii) which ones they preferred and why
- (iv) whether or not they understood that visual culture is a source for learning;
- (v) if they were aware of its impact on their identity construction and perceptions of self, others and the world.

Once the data had been interpreted, it was clear that I had collected sufficient information to answer the first four questions, but had only scratched the surface of these issues from an educational perspective. The data relating to children's understanding of the impact of visual culture in identity construction was unsatisfactory for a number of reasons. First, I had had to limit the number of exploratory questions about how and to what extent they thought they were influenced by visual culture during the group interviews due to time constraints. It was clear that a teacher would have to engage students in more in-depth discussion and exploration of topics like favourite heroes/heroines, choices of bedroom decoration and sources of imagery, and ideas for their own art before they could be asked to explore relationships between visual culture and people's choices, dreams and desires. Second, these children could not comprehend visual culture as a learning resource, probably because they were unable to distinguish between simulated images and images in the real world and between types and functions of visual culture genres or link them to personal experiences. Moreover, the request to tell me what they learned from looking at visual images probably confused children of this age because it required them to grapple with abstract ideas. For example, had I brought a real example of advertisement into class for them to look at they might have referred to its commercial functions or talked about how it influenced their lifestyles and choices of consumer goods. Because these children found it difficult to talk about ways visual culture influenced them, I concluded that investigating what children think, know or do in relation to this subject constitutes a problem in itself. Finally, another problem that emerged, as is the case in any interview based research, was that what children *say* to strangers does not necessarily reflect their actual understanding, attitudes, experiences, preferences, and practices. Their responses may have been influenced by factors such as the social setting of the interviews and other participants.

Consequently, it became clear that two of the interview questions set for this research needed further investigation and the design of the second part of the research method must be changed. A decision was taken to abandon research into teachers' views because I considered they would not know much about visual culture education as this was a new concept for Greece and proceed with an educational intervention in the form of a case study, action research or quasi-experimental research. It was important at this point to establish

whether and to what extent primary age children understand visual culture as a source of inspiration and imitation. It was also clear that choices would have to be made as to which visual culture genres to explore in more depth. I speculated that TV programmes or animated cartoons would be the best choice because the children who participated in the group interviews said they looked at them most frequently and preferred them over other kinds of visual culture genres. At this point I identified the following five questions arising from analysis of interview data could inform a second part in the research.

- Why do primary age children find it so difficult to understand that visual culture is a learning resource?
- Do they understand and are they able to talk about the subject, style, context, function, mood, and meaning in visual images?
- Do they understand the ways in which their values, beliefs or attitudes are influenced by popular culture imagery?
- What strategies can art teachers use to help them overcome the difficulties they have understanding the impact of visual culture on their identity construction?
- What kinds of critical thinking and interpretive skills do they need so as to be able to read and construct meaning from visual images in everyday life?

It was not possible to pursue all the questions above so choices had to be made. The next chapter explains and discusses the design of the second part of the research.

CHAPTER 5

PLANNING THE INTERVENTION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Originally I intended to conduct group interviews with Greek children aged 6-12 and then obtain information about primary school teachers' views of and needs regarding teaching about visual culture in art lessons through a questionnaire survey. At the time I hypothesised that the data from the group interviews would inform the design of the teacher questionnaire. It was anticipated that obtaining teachers' viewpoints on visual culture and expanding the content of their art curricula might assist Greek curriculum developers to broaden the content of the primary art curriculum. However, the group interviews produced only generalised data about children's awareness of the impact of visual culture on their self-identifications. Because of this, I decided to revise the design of the second part of the research. It appeared more important at this point to try to investigate the answers to one of the questions identified at the end of the last chapter in more depth.

A main aim of the first part of the research was to obtain accurate descriptive information about the extent to which primary age children in Greece were aware of the impact of visual culture on their identity construction. Although I had gathered some useful information from the group interviews about what kinds of visual images they preferred, the data did not explicate their understanding of the role of visual culture on identity construction. So, in the second part of this research I decided to teach some primary age children myself using specific examples of the TV programmes and animated films the children who participated in the interviews mentioned as favourites. I wanted to further investigate whether and to what extent children of this age could understand the makers' intentions and the ways these

programmes influence their desires, fantasies and dreams. Although the literature review showed that art educators had researched primary age children's understanding of artistic intention, they had mostly used fine art examples (Izenzon, 1987). Since there was a scarcity of research about the chosen topic in Greece and elsewhere, I thought this inquiry might add to the existing knowledge of how to introduce visual culture to primary art education.

The rationale for this decision was as follows. Intention is one of the key concepts that informs the meaning embodied in a visual image. According to Sturken & Cartwright (2001), creators of visual images always intend viewers to read them in certain ways. This is especially the case with advertising, where commercial companies invest a great deal of time and money to ascertaining the impact of their work on the public psyche in order to sell their products. However, the children who participated in the interviews did not comment on makers' intentions. Moreover, the data suggested that they desired to own consumer products like cars and clothes and dreamed of the kinds of lifestyles advertising and mass media promote. They associated lifestyle with a glamorous self-image. For these children a 'good life' was the one attained by rich and famous celebrities like *Angelina Jolie* and *Brad Pitt*. However, they were not able to explain or were aware of the role of advertisements, TV programmes or magazines in promoting certain goods and commodities or influencing consumers desires. Finally, as Rogoff (1998) and Brown *et al* (1994) point out, visual images provide individuals with examples of identities through which they construct, maintain, and communicate their own self-concepts. But the children participating in the group interviews had difficulty understanding this.

A wide range of visual culture genres (fine art, advertisements, photography, TV programmes, films, etc) could be used as resources to examine maker's intentions in art lessons. The data from the group interviews suggested that these children's lives were mediated particularly through television images. So, I anticipated that this choice of curriculum content would motivate them and stimulate their interest. I also anticipated that I might be able to learn more about ways children of this age understand the role of selected TV programmes on their lives by conducting an educational intervention. Educational interventions typically aim either to test out new teaching methods, strategies or approaches,

or to help learners to develop skills and change attitudes. I elected to carry out an educational intervention myself with two classes of children who had already participated in the research because I anticipated I could engage them in a process of description, analysis and reflection on their own visual and aesthetic experiences of watching particular TV programmes and animated films. I hoped to determine whether they could understand the way they influence their dreams about their future lives. I also considered that educational intervention might be the best way to gather data to answer the following research questions. The rationale was that formal instruction might enable children to respond better, than they did in the interviews, to questions about TV programmes' influences on their lives.

The following research questions were developed for this second part of the research in September 2006. The last question was revised in October 2006 after I decided to undertake an educational intervention and designed the teaching strategy.

1. To what extent are 10-12 year old children able to understand how and why TV programmes, and specifically telenovelas and animated films, are constructed?
2. Are they able to make associations between how and why they are constructed and influence their own desires and dreams for the future? (If yes, what kinds of associations can they make?)
3. How can an art teacher help them improve their knowledge and understanding of how telenovelas and animated movies influence the ways they see their future selves and construct their personal identities?
4. Does the 'Deconstructing Television Imagery' strategy help students identify and negotiate ways they construct knowledge about themselves and the world?

5.2 'THEMATIC' CASE STUDY

After consulting general educational research methods texts such as Cohen *et al* (2000), Robson, (1993), Yin (1994), Bell (1999), Gomm *et al* (2000), Merriam (1998), and Bassey (1999) I concluded that the appropriate method for the second part of the research was case study. The main rationale was that this can facilitate understanding of how to translate ideas and theories into practice. For example, how theories of interpretation can be used to help primary age children identify the intent behind selected visual images. A second justification

for this choice was that it centres on empirical investigations of particular contemporary phenomena within a real life context, in this case an intervention within a school environment, and uses multiple sources of evidence. Third, I realised it would also give me opportunities to use and describe a particular curriculum intervention in the form of a series of lessons with the aim of establishing the extent to which children can understand the impact of visual culture on self-concepts and the role of a teacher in this process. So, qualitative case study methodology was considered most appropriate for obtaining more in depth information about and deeper insights into primary age children's perceptions of the role of visual imagery on their identity construction.

The design of this case study was influenced in particular by Freedman & Wood's (1999) report of their research into student judgement of purpose, interpretation, and relationships in visual culture. They described the method as 'thematic' because it focused on certain themes that were either predetermined or emergent (ibid, 1999, p. 132). As noted previously the themes and related questions emerged from analysis of the data from the group interviews reported in chapters 3 and 4. Freedman & Wood's research was a case study of a student-centred intervention in a school. They developed and implemented a series of art lessons in order to find out how some high school students responded to and interpreted artworks, advertisements, cartoons and propaganda posters. Similarly, I decided to develop and implement a lesson unit that would increase my own understanding of how primary age children can understand how TV programmes are constructed and influence dreams about their future life.

I anticipated that adopting a researcher-teacher role would enable me to develop more intimate and informal relationships with the children and liberate them from the fear of talking about themselves so they shared their thoughts, ideas and life experiences more. I also anticipated that teaching a sequence of lessons over time would provide me with opportunities to investigate, compare and crosscheck a range of children's responses to and interpretations of visual imagery and study ways they articulated them. Unlike Freedman & Wood's study, the plan was to conduct independent interventions inside two different classrooms. The rationale for choosing to conduct two case studies rather than one was that

this makes the evidence more compelling and the overall study more robust (Yin, 1994; Merriam, 1998). I hoped the two interventions would produce similar results and thus strengthen and broaden analytic generalisations.

5.2.1 Limitations of Case Study Research

The classes chosen were understood to be unique rather than typical examples of Grades 5 and 6 and no attempt was made to generalise beyond the immediate cases. This is a frequent criticism of case study research (Gomm *et al*, 2000). I understood that statistical generalisation that might lead to policy outcomes could not be made from these cases. However, I hoped that conducting an educational intervention would enable practical examples for visual culture education and discuss the implications afford if similar art lessons were taught by other art teachers and for my own teaching. I hoped that conducting in-depth analyses while teaching in a specific setting would produce data about why children responded in certain ways, or what teachers should do to enhance their learning about visual culture. Although scholars like Bassey (1999) and Yin (1994) argue that concepts of reliability and validity are problematic in case studies mainly because they are unlikely to be repeated under the same circumstances, I decided to use this research method because it might highlight the particularities of a lesson unit with children aged 10-12. Bassey (1999, p. 75) argues that because ‘a case study is the study of a singularity’ it is important for the researcher to try to increase its trustworthiness. Following Lincoln & Guba (1985), Gomm *et al* (2000) and Bassey’s (1999) strategies to increase trustworthiness an attempt was made to: (i) provide information about the characteristics and population of the classes that participated in the case studies, (ii) thoroughly search for significant characteristics of each case and report them in the descriptive part of the second part of the research, (iii) collect data using different sources and techniques, (iv) write down sufficient details so that the readers of the case study report can themselves determine whether the findings can be applied to other cases in Greece or elsewhere.

5.2.2 Setting up the Intervention

The interview data had revealed age and gender differences in children’s preferences for and attitudes towards visual culture as well as in their understanding and communication of its

impact on their identity construction. Younger children aged 6-10 years appeared to have more difficulty than older ones finding examples to justify their responses and express their ideas, probably because they lacked the necessary vocabulary. A decision was taken, therefore, to target a population of children aged between 10 and 12 (Grades 5 and 6).

The participants in the group interviews were children from two schools in urban Athens and two schools in rural N. Ileia district. The data analysis did not reveal any significant geographical differences in their responses. In part two of research, I selected two cases/classes in one of the schools located in Athens, due to time and financial constraints. I selected school C again because of the small number of students in each class. The student population was a maximum of twenty per class in comparison with school D with 25 to 30 students per class. I anticipated that the smaller class size would ensure children's participation in class discussion and learning activities, and enable me to pay attention to each individual, and give frequent and substantive feedback.

5.2.3 Design of Lesson Unit

Before I designed the teaching strategy I surveyed twelve curriculum examples (Table D). I chose to adopt Degge & Cochrane's strategy for criticising television images because it had already been tested in classrooms as explained in Barrett & Clark's teaching guide 'Lessons for Teaching Art Criticism' (1995). Their two-part lesson plan targeted at Grades 9-12 was devised to help high school students understand 'the visual language of television production and elements and principles of design, and learn 'how TV programmes are created' (p. 53). Another stated aim was to help students understand 'how visual images carry cultural messages and influence their viewers' (p. 53). Their lessons emphasise interpretation of TV programmes and teacher questioning of students is in the centre of this approach. For the first part of the lesson they suggested students should be introduced to elements and principles of design, watch an extract of a selected TV programme, complete a study sheet, and engage in classroom discussion about the formal design elements they observed in the extract. For the second part they recommended that students should complete a study sheet about their observations of clothing, hairstyling, cars, and character's actions and behaviours shown on the TV programme extract they watched. Then they should write down and

discuss their responses to questions about stereotypes, messages and values communicated by the selected TV programme in groups. Degge & Cochrane also suggested that the lessons could be extended by having students produce a short television programme. According to them, student learning could be assessed through reviewing the completed study sheets and their participation in discussion.

Table D: Curriculum Examples Surveyed for the Teaching Strategy Design

AUTHOR	TITLE	REFERENCES
Adams (2001)	A Critical Study of Comics	<i>International Journal of Art and Design Education</i> , 20 (2), pp. 133-143
Alexander & Cousens (2004)	Teaching TV Soaps	London: British Film Institute
Barret (2002)	Interpreting Art: Building Communal and Individual Understanding	In Gaudelius, Y. & Speirs, P. (Eds.) <i>Contemporary Issues to Art Education</i> . New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc., pp. 291-301
Cameron & Al-Saleh (2003)	Again: A Teaching Guide to Using Film and Television with Three- to Eleven- Years Old	London: BFI Education
Degge & Cochrane (1995)	Criticising Television: Aesthetic and Cultural Approaches to TV Images.	In Barret, T. & Clark, G. (Eds.), <i>Lessons for Teaching Art Criticism</i> . Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse for Art Education, Bloomington, In., pp. 53-59
Duncum (2003a)	Visual Culture in the Classroom	<i>Art Education</i> , 56 (2), pp. 25-32
Fehlamm (1992)	Making Meaning Visible: Critically Reading TV	<i>The English Journal</i> , 81 (7), pp. 19-24
Keifer-Boyd, Amburgy, & Knight (2003).	Three Approaches to Teaching Visual Culture in K-12 School Contexts	<i>Art Education</i> , 56 (2), pp. 49-51
Marshall (2002)	Exploring Culture and Identity through Artifacts: Three Art Lessons Derived from Contemporary Art Practice	In Gaudelius, Y. & Speirs, P. (Eds.), <i>Contemporary Issues to Art Education</i> . New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc. pp. 281-290
Phillips (1991)	Media Education and Art and Design: Other Ways of Seeing	<i>Journal of Art and Design Education</i> , 10 (1), pp. 23-30
Scanlan & Feinberg, (2000)	The Cartoon Society: Using 'The Simpsons' to Teach and Learn Sociology	<i>Teaching Sociology</i> , 28 (2), pp. 127-139
Tavin & Anderson (2003).	Teaching (Popular) Visual Culture: Deconstructing Disney in the Elementary Classroom	<i>Art Education</i> , 56 (3), pp. 21-24 & 33-35

Changes Made to Degge & Cochrane's Lesson Plans

Degge & Cochrane's lesson plans were designed for use with American high school students with a basic background in two and three-dimensional art and included learning about the visual language of TV production, design principles and elements and messages in TV imagery. I had to adapt and simplify them to make them suitable for Greek children aged 10-12. The rationale was that in Greece primary school children of this age have only learned about basic formal elements of art (dot, line, shape, and colour). Analysis of student textbooks for art (Appendix 2) had confirmed they do not include any lessons targeted at mass media literacy. This made me think that teaching about the visual language of television might be irrelevant for children who have limited experience in recognising formal elements of art. The age and cognitive development of the primary age children in the sample was another factor taken into account. I deemed that 10-12 year old children might not fully comprehend terms like 'cutting on action', 'low-angle shots', and 'soft focus'. Moreover, I decided not to introduce the children to any elements of design as this was not a learning objective for my research, and teaching about basic design terminology would be time consuming. Instead, I decided that a more appropriate learning objective was for students to understand how, by whom and why television programmes or animated films are constructed. I hypothesised that getting children to study the production process and the importance of scheduling and promoting selected TV programmes and animated films would help them understand how audiences are targeted.

Although Degge & Cochrane's main concern was to engage students in talking about TV images, they also suggested the use of practical work. They recommended that children were aided to write or produce a short television programme. I decided to simplify this task by asking children only to create summaries of imaginary scenarios, first for a telenovela and second for an animated film, targeted specific audiences and to explain why they chose them. Another practical activity I planned was to ask them to draw their future selves. I anticipated tasks would offer them opportunities to develop 'creative thinking'. Table E summarises the main points of Degge & Cochrane's lesson plans in the left column and the changes I made in the right one.

Table E: Changes to Degge & Cochrane's Strategy

	'Criticising TV Images' (Degge & Cochrane, 1995)	'Deconstructing Television Imagery' (Christopoulou, 2007)
Grades	Grades 9-12: Children aged 15-18	Grades 5-6: Children aged 10-12
Aims	Students should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn the visual language of TV production (zoom, cut, disclosure, close-up, etc) • Learn design principles and elements (colour, balance, space, symmetry, volume) • Understand that TV images carry cultural messages 	Students should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about the production process, personnel, scheduling and promoting mass produced images • Learn about makers/producers' intentions • Understand that mass media images carry cultural messages • Understand that mass media images influence people's views, values, dreams, and choices
Content	TV programmes	TV programmes, Animated cartoons, Films, TV commercials
Resources	Extracts from TV programmes	Extracts from TV programmes, Animated cartoons, Films
Lesson Activities	Looking at TV images Discussion Interpretation Possible practical work, i.e. writing essays and production of short TV programmes	Looking at TV images/Watching extracts from TV programmes, films. etc Question & Answer session, Class Discussion Interpretation Practical work: writing work, Art-making, production of scenarios, etc
Assessment	Informal: through classroom participation and review of children's work	Informal: through classroom participation Formal: Student portfolio, evaluation sheet

Because Degge & Cochrane's lesson plans did not include questions about the production process, and/or scheduling of TV programmes, I consulted the British Film Institute's (BFI) resource for teaching about films, soap operas and sitcoms. BFI's resources *Look Again* designed by Cameron & Al-Saleh (2003) and *Teaching TV Soaps* written by Alexander & Cousens (2004) include schemes of work and key questions for exploring production and scheduling of TV programmes, audience targeting, genre and narrative conventions, and representation and ideology because television imagery, like other kinds of visual imagery, has a dense and complex language. So, children who are already familiar with it should learn to 'read' them at this deeper level (Cameron & Al-Saleh, 2003). Table E summarises sources, categories, topics and questions included in the lesson plans.

Table F: Sources, Categories, Topics and Questions Included in the Lesson Unit Plan

	Categories to Be Explored	Topics for Categories	Questions for the Lesson Unit
British Film Institute's Resources	Genre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Origins • Narrative conventions • Themes, issues, characters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When and where was this TV programme/ animated film produced? • What is the subject matter of this TV programme/ animated film? • Who are its main characters? • Can you name its main characteristics? • Can you say what kind of TV programme/ animated film this is?
	Production context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production team • Writing team • Design team • Technical team • Editing team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who do you think made this TV programme /animated film? • Why do you think the makers selected this plot and these characters? • What effects did they use to support their ideas?
	Audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveying & targeting audiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which audience has the maker aimed at? • Why do you think he chose this particular audience?
	Scheduling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily schedules/listings in magazines • Audiences & scheduling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What time of the day is the TV programme/ animated film broadcast? / Why?
	Construction of Realism & Myth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approaches to constructing realism/ myth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there aspects of the TV programme /animated film that are realistic? Can you name any? • Why do you think the maker included these aspects? • Can you identify any aspects of the TV programme/animated film that are fictional or unreal?
Degge & Cochrane's Suggestions	Representations & Stereotyping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender, class & Ethnicity representations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are men and women represented in the TV programme/animated film? • How are the different classes (rich and poor) portrayed in it? • Are these representations accurate?
	Dominant values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural values and ideological messages in TV imagery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think is the main meaning of this TV programme/animated film? • What lifestyles, values and points of view are represented in it? • Which of these do you accept or reject? Why?
	Influences		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does its audience use this TV programme to get advice about an event in their lives? • Is there anything you dream of being after watching <i>Anipotaktes Kardies (Rebelde Way)</i>? Why? • Has it contributed in any way to your life plans?

I chose to include questions in the lessons about the origins and narrative conventions of telenovelas and *Barbie* animated films (Table F). I anticipated that children would learn how to distinguish these particular genres from others if they explored their generic characteristics namely recurring themes, typical characters, settings and locations, and narrative elements. For example, romantic relationships, sexual interactions, friendship, and social class confrontations are some of the recurring themes in telenovelas (La Pastina, 2006; Rêgo, 2003). Regarding their settings and locations, these often include schools, houses, parks and shops. Their narrative relies on gender or social class conflicts in interpersonal relations. According to Alexander & Cousens (2004), learning how to categorise particular entertainment forms can assist children to make the tacit knowledge they have about their generic characteristics explicit. It can offer them opportunities to reflect on their choices of and preferences for particular kinds of TV programmes or films to watch.

I also decided to explore with children how ‘realism’ and ‘myth’ are constructed in selected TV programmes because these are considered to be crucial for distinguishing the literal from hidden messages of TV programmes (Cameron & Al-Saleh, 2003). I used the term ‘realism’ to mediate reproduction of the dominant sense of reality in a form that makes it understandable (Alexander & Cousens, 2004; Fiske, 1987). I used the term ‘myth’, on the other hand, to refer to an artificial construct of what people’s lives might be like. Drawing on Baudrillard’s ideas about simulacra and simulations, Flood & Bamford (2006) point out that visual images in films, television and computer games, provide viewers with simulations of experiences that help them model and shape their identities. So, I hoped that discussing and contrasting ‘realism’ and ‘myth’ in selected TV programmes in class would enable children to realise how they contribute to their understanding of the world around them. However, I did not plan to discuss particular aesthetic codes and conventions like the prolongation of events and close ups on facial expressions in detail, or the different cultural contexts that influence the construction of realism in them (Alexander & Cousens, 2004) because of time limits.

Following Degge & Cochrane's strategy, I decided to ask children to explore the social and cultural messages embodied in selected TV programmes (Table E). I also planned to pose questions about gender, social class, and lifestyles represented by them. I hoped that raising these issues with the whole class would increase their understanding about this and about ways they can influence their moral and ethical values, norms and behaviour. I also decided to add another lesson to engage children in discussion of how and to what extent they thought watching the selected TV programmes influenced the ways they envisioned their future selves. I hoped the enquiry would increase their understanding of the role television imagery plays in this in general. Furthermore, I hoped it would provide the data I needed to answer the related research question.

Title and Content

I named the strategy 'Deconstructing Television Imagery' because I understood it as suitable for use in discussing, interpreting and criticising programmes, animated cartoons and films broadcasted by television. Deconstruction in this research is understood as a teaching and learning process, in which teachers get learners to: (i) look at and describe visual images that have been selected for study; (ii) reflect on the pleasure they derived from looking at and experiencing them; (iii) participate in class discussion about how and why viewers and individuals perceive visual imagery differently; (iv) examine ways in which visual images in mass-media contribute to identity construction, and (v) create visual images themselves to represent, explore and construct their personal identities (Alvermann & Hagood, 2000; Motomura, 2003; Chung, 2007). Also questions about how, by whom and why TV programmes are made, elements and principles of design, genre, audience targeting, representation, narrative, and ideology can all be included in deconstructing television imagery (Philips, 1991; Degge & Cochrane, 1995; Alexander & Cousens, 2004).

I constructed the content of the lesson unit using the results of the group interviews conducted during January and February 2006, as I knew they had some relevance for Grade 5 and 6 students' lives and visual experiences. The majority of children who participated in the interviews preferred TV programmes and mentioned sitcoms, telenovelas, soap operas, social dramas, athletics, and animated cartoons. I chose telenovelas and *Barbie* animated

films because there were no lesson plans/guidelines for teaching about these genres in the international literature I had read for art and/or media education and because many children mentioned them during the interviews. Both telenovelas and *Barbie* animated films are constructed from images, speech and sound. The lesson unit focused mostly on the visual elements of these genres and the role of the images in conveying cultural messages. It aimed to raise children's awareness of how the visual aspects of telenovelas and *Barbie* animated films are designed and constructed, the kinds of social and cultural messages the images convey, and how these influence their own dreams and aspirations.

Before I developed the lessons, it was necessary to search about telenovelas and *Barbie* animated films, as my knowledge about them was limited. Telenovelas are TV series produced mainly in Latin American countries. They are broadcast on a daily basis and last from up to six months to one year (Rêgo, 2003). Typically their narratives are melodramatic, relying on stories about romantic couples who face opposition to staying together (La Pastina, 2006). Their main plot line and subplots usually include elements of suspense to ensure viewers watch continuing episodes. According to Rêgo (2003), makers of telenovelas over the past three decades have moved beyond the classic melodrama and deal with issues closer to real life such as drug abuse, abortion, corruption, homosexuality, cloning, the environment, racism, and urban violence. Telenovelas are broadcast by state TV channels in Greece since 1986 (<http://el.wikipedia.org>). In the early 1990s private TV channels also started broadcast them. They are usually scheduled between 13.00 and 20.00. Until the mid 1990 telenovelas broadcast by Greek TV channels had subtitles. Since then they have been doubled in Greek language (Greek actors/actresses' voices cover those of Latin American ones). At the time the research was conducted *Floricienta*, *Anipotaktes Kardies*, *Maria ee Ashimee* (*Maria the Ugly*), *Luna*, *Corina the Wildcat*, *Ee Ashimee pou EGINE Omorfee* (*La Fea Más Bella*) were being broadcast by state and private TV channels.

Mattel Inc produces films, books, video games, a magazine, and other related products with the brand name *Barbie* as well as actual *Barbie* dolls. The first animated film called *Barbie as Rapunzel* was released by *Mattel Inc* in 2002. All *Barbie* animated films were released directly on DVDs. Most of these are remakes of well-known fairytales like *The 12 Dancing*

Princes or stories like *Nutcracker* and *Swan Lake*. Only two films, *Barbie Fairytopia* and *Barbie and the Magic of Pegasus* have original plots (<http://en.wikipedia.org>). Search in Greek TV guides *Tilerama*, *TV Zapping* and *7 Meres TV* showed that the private TV channel *Alter* regularly broadcasts these films every Saturday evening, between 21.00 and 22.30.

Due to time constraints, the lesson unit consisted of five sessions (Table G). In the first two, I planned to involve children in deconstructing the telenovela *Anipotaktes Kardies (Rebelde Way)*. Although *Anipotaktes Kardies* was not broadcast in prime time, it was one of the TV programmes the primary age children participating in the group interviews told me they watched every day. The fact that it was targeted at a teenage audience suggested that children aged 10-12 might identify with some of the problems the teenagers in the series faced. The references to sexuality and human relationships in the telenovela may also serve to attract the attention of the children of this age (Moran, 2003). Ostensibly, *Anipotaktes Kardies (Rebelde Way)* portrays everyday relationships realistically, which may help its audience to engage with the emotional conflicts portrayed and keep them tuning to episode after episode (Moran, 2003; Pena, 2004). Children in part 1 had also mentioned identification with characters in this telenovela as a reason for watching it.

In the next two sessions I planned to involve the children in deconstructing *Mattel's* animated film *Barbie of Swan Lake*. These films had a significant appeal for the girls aged 6-10 who participated in the interviews. Although they said they watched other animated cartoons, like *SpongeBob Squarepants*, *Superman*, and *Looney Tunes*, they told me they preferred *Barbie* animated films. The boys, on the other hand, only mentioned films or animated cartoons portraying fighting and adventure, like *Ninja Turtles*, *Superman*, and *Spiderman*. The choice of the *Barbie of Swan Lake* animated film as a lesson content was based on the premise that it would be good resource for examining the issue of audience targeting. I anticipated it would be helpful to compare it with animated cartoons or other kinds of TV programmes so as to increase children's understanding of how and why makers target certain audiences.

I planned to use the last session to evaluate both the children's learning and the design and implementation of the lessons. I designed and planned a multiple response sheet for use to evaluate whether the learning objectives I set had been achieved (Appendix 21).

Table G: Plan of Lessons

CLASS 1	CLASS 2
Introductory session	Introductory session
Lesson 1: <i>Deconstructing telenovela Anipotaktes Kardies</i>	Lesson 1: <i>Deconstructing telenovela Anipotaktes Kardies</i>
Lesson 2: <i>Deconstructing telenovela Anipotaktes Kardies</i>	Lesson 2: <i>Deconstructing telenovela Anipotaktes Kardies</i>
Lesson 3: <i>Deconstructing Barbie animated films</i>	Lesson 3: <i>Deconstructing Barbie animated films</i>
Lesson 4: <i>Deconstructing Barbie animated films</i>	Lesson 4: <i>Deconstructing Barbie animated films</i>
Lesson 5: Evaluation	Lesson 5: Evaluation

Student Learning Objectives

The student learning objectives were developed in a way that would respond to the research questions developed for the second part of the research. I designed them to enable me find out how 10-12 year old children respond to and interpret selected TV programmes and animated films and reflect on their own visual experiences. They were intended to enable children to develop the thinking skills of observation, generalisation, seeing patterns, recognition of intended meanings, and speculation. Therefore, the stated objectives for the lesson unit were that children should be able to:

- engage in processes of description, analysis, speculation and reflection;
- learn that creators of television programmes always intend that viewers read them in certain ways;
- learn how visual images from television carry cultural messages and that these influence viewers' responses and values;
- understand that visual images from TV programmes and mass media influence their own desires and future dreams, and the way they construct self-images.

Visual Resources, Materials and Equipment

Degge and Cochrane (1995) introduced the lessons by showing extracts of a TV programme. Therefore, I planned to do the same using extracts from the telenovela *Anipotaktes Kardies (Rebelde Way)* and the *Barbie of Swan Lake* animated film. The aim was to motivate children and open up discussion. Because the teaching period allotted for art by the Greek curriculum was only 40 minutes I decided to show a five-minute extract only from each of the selected genres. In preparation, I downloaded a five-minute video of *Anipotaktes Kardies* from the YouTube video sharing website, because the format was compatible with the Windows Media Player programme on my personal laptop. I chose this short video about the telenovela because it contained a mix of episodes showing main characters in a range of settings. I borrowed the original DVD *Barbie of Swan Lake* from a friend who had purchased it for her daughters. I decided to show the children a five minute extract (36:30-41:30) with all the main characters. I planned to turn off the sound so children would not be distracted by the plots in the hope they would concentrate better on the visual elements of the telenovela and *Barbie* film and the questions I asked them.

Typically, Greek primary schools have limited audiovisual equipment and computers are located in special rooms or offices. The head teacher at School C informed me that it had only one video/DVD player located in a classroom used by another teacher. As it was inconvenient for her to move, I decided not to use this facility. Furthermore, no classroom was supplied with a computer. So, I had to use my own laptop to play extracts. This was not ideal but as there was no overhead projector to connect with the laptop, I planned to ask children to gather around me to watch the telenovela and animated film extracts. I planned to ask children to share the art supplies there were in their own classroom (e.g. watercolours, crayons, pencil colours, feltip, and drawing paper) and use their own pencils, or feltip for the practical tasks.

Classroom Organisation and Management

As Matsagouras (1998) points out the classroom environment can either support or detract from student learning and classroom teachers should develop seating plans that match their teaching. Given the emphasis on discussion, I wanted to maximise the amount of student

participation, minimise behaviour problems and create a positive, safe learning environment. According to Matsagouras (1998), even small changes in classroom organisation affect children's behaviour. As I planned to teach five lessons only I decided not to change the usual seating arrangements in case this distracted or displeased the children. I anticipated that keeping the regular teacher's classroom seating arrangement (desks in rows and a teacher table in front of the room) enabled children to see and hear instructions and they had access to all learning materials and I could monitor discussion and provide feedback.

Assessment/Evaluation of Student Learning

In Degge & Cochrane (1995) lesson plans, learning assessment was informal. It arrived from student participation in classroom discussion and by reviewing their practical work. As they pointed out, 'active involvement and thoughtful participation are the immediate criteria' (p. 55) for assessing student learning. In my experience, Greek teachers do not usually use tests, or portfolios to assess student learning formally in art lessons. The Greek national curriculum for art suggests that teachers 'should evaluate/assess student effort, learning, achievement, interest and participation using various informal means (discussion, comments, etc)' (NC, 2003, p. 137). It does not suggest formal assessment methods like portfolio, tests, reviewing written work, etc. Although primary school teachers do not give marks and grades on a daily basis in art lessons as they do in every other school subjects, they have to mark students' achievement in art when they complete student reports every three months.

For the research it was necessary to find a way to evaluate student learning in art that would enable me establish whether the learning objectives had been achieved. I reasoned that although it was necessary to evaluate learning, marks or grades were not required since the children were not used to this happening in art and might become stressed. Before I decided what method to use to evaluate student learning I reviewed international literature on this topic. It showed that student participation in discussion and art making, their written work, portfolios or exhibitions of visual work, oral presentations, story sharing, and multiple choice written tests can all provide the basis for assessing/evaluating learning in art lessons (Primosch & David, 2001; Moore & Reynolds, 1999; Eklund & Medrano, 2000; Fey &

Bashore, 2000; Milbrandt & Bonds, 2000; Buffington, 2007; Hearne, 2001; Pollard, 2002; McDonald, 2002).

Apart from appraising children's participation in discussion and practical activities, I decided to collect their drawings and written work in a portfolio and evaluate it at the end of each lesson. I also prepared a multiple choice response worksheet since this is a quick way to find out what children have learned in the end of the lesson unit (Hearne, 2001). I chose to ask them about the telenovela *Maria ee Ashimee* (*Maria the Ugly*) because I anticipated they would already know about it as the Greek private TV channel *Mega* has broadcast it on the prime time zone (21.00-21.30) since November 2006 and many of them would have watched it. The evaluation worksheet included five multiple choice questions and asked children to select from given answers (i) the genre of TV series *Maria ee Ashimee* (*Maria the Ugly*), (ii) audience of this programme, (iii) elements that were used by the telenovela's makers to construct realism, (iv) the cultural values conveyed by this TV programme, and (v) the main stereotypes promoted by the telenovela. The evaluation worksheet included one true/false question. This asked children to state whereas given statements about ways the telenovela influenced people were true/or false. Finally, the worksheet included two open questions that asked children to (i) write one or more cultural messages they thought that were conveyed by this telenovela and (ii) state if, and how, telenovela *Maria ee Ashimee* (*Maria the Ugly*) influenced young boys and girls.

Pollard (2002) argues strongly that teachers should involve students in evaluation and assessment by giving them opportunities to review their own learning and determine what they have learned. So, I planned to ask them to fill in an '*I learned....*' statement. I anticipated this might enable them to reflect on their learning and spontaneously express their thoughts about the lessons. The self-evaluation would take place after the evaluation worksheet was completed. I hoped its completion would remind children what the lessons were about, and enable them fill in the self-evaluation statement.

5.2.4 The Role of Teacher/ Researcher

The decision to teach the lesson unit myself was taken because visual culture education was a new concept in Greece and unknown to most generalist primary teachers. It was, therefore, crucial for this research to determine if it could be introduced into Greek art education and whether the ‘Deconstructing Television Imagery’ model was appropriate for primary age students. I anticipated that as an experienced art teacher I would be able to motivate the children, secure their participation in lessons, and ask them to explain their thoughts by interacting with them. Delivering the lessons myself meant that I could further reflect on what happened when plans were put into practice and engage in formative evaluation. Another advantage of being a teacher-researcher was the opportunity to gain extensive knowledge of the children’s responses to the new subject matter in art lessons.

However, researchers, who have conducted classroom inquiry before, point out there are constraints and difficulties in being both a teacher and researcher at the same time. According to Wong (1995), although inquiry and investigation are common characteristics of research and teaching, their goals are different. On the one hand, the aim of research is to understand a situation or phenomenon, and on the other the purpose of teaching is to help students learn. There is a conflict of purposes and in the conduct of teaching and researching at the same time. Baumann (1996) associated the tensions a teacher-researcher experiences in the classroom with time and task constraints. In an earlier study he found that teaching roles and duties conflicted with the plans he had to collect, analyse, and reflect for research (ibid, p.31). I realised that attempting to be both researcher and teacher in this study would be challenging and that the teaching duties would limit the time available for observing the children’s behaviour. Researches must implement systematic procedures for collecting data and this is difficult to achieve while teaching. My goal as a researcher was to gain an insight into children’s understanding of the key concepts in the research rather than teach them. However, it was important to report and reflect on my role and actions as a teacher as well as a researcher. I anticipated that reflecting on them in a researcher diary would enable me to record and document how children’s ideas and explanations changed through the intervention and what is needed for developing visual culture curricula.

5.2.5 Design of Data Gathering Instruments

Maintaining the dual role of teacher and researcher raises major issues about how to gather the data that is crucial for research purposes, in this case children's responses to the telenovela and participation in lessons. It also raised issues about the trustworthiness of the research and researcher bias. I decided, therefore, to employ five data gathering instruments. Data was to be collected about the content of the lessons in the form of lesson plans, researcher field-notes taken in class, a systematic diary completed after the class, tape-records of lessons and a portfolio of children's drawings and written work.

The lesson plans written in advance described the aims, instructional content and method of delivery step-by-step. I intended to use the objectives to evaluate student learning and the effectiveness of the intervention as a whole. I also planned to write down field-notes in class about children's participation, motivation and behaviour towards the lessons. Because these would be quickly scribbled down in Greek language and I planned to translate them and describe each session in English in the researcher diary. I also planned to write down about the children's behaviour and participation in lessons in the diary and critically reflect on and evaluate the action and my position and role as a teacher-researcher. The lessons were to be tape-recorded so as to capture as much verbatim dialogue as possible. I anticipated that playing the tapes back would help me remember details I had missed. As Blaikie *et al* (2004) point out children's practical art work reflects their own thinking, understanding, effort and progress. I decided to collect their drawings and written essays systematically in a portfolio. I hoped they would help me evaluate their learning and answer research questions about whether they understand that TV imagery influences aspirations and dreams.

5.2.6 Method of Data Collection and Analysis

The process of preliminary analysis and interpretation of the case study data had five steps. (i) The first step was to read the transcripts of the lessons, my field-notes and reflections in research diary. This enabled me familiarise with the intervention data. (ii) In order to write a 'thick description' (Yin, 1994) about the intervention I listed the topics included in the lesson plans as follows: student learning objectives, visual resources/materials/equipments, classroom organisation, lesson activities, and student learning evaluation (Appendix, 23). I

anticipated this would provide the reader of the thesis an overall view of what was planned and happened during the intervention and enable me to write about it. (iii) After writing a summary of the intervention, I reviewed data from each case separately and clustered similar topics, key issues, and concepts into categories and subcategories and abbreviated as codes (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994). The subcategories were related to the questions for the second part of the research and to what children said during the lessons (e.g. makers/producers of the telenovela and *Barbie* film; their intentions; reality elements, etc). I also selected segments of intervention transcripts, field-notes and diary that corresponded to each category and code. For example, the extract from the researcher diary '*one girl and some boys were disappointed, probably because they didn't like the particular telenovela*' and segments from lesson transcripts like 'these films are only for girls' corresponded with the category 'children's objections to lesson content'. As with group interviews computer software package ATLAS-ti was used to code and analyse data. (iv) To reduce the categories and subcategories previously identified I rearranged them into sub-themes. For example, the categories 'purpose and practices in art lessons', 'children's perceptions about art' and 'children's attitudes towards Deconstructing Television Imagery lessons' were summarised into the subcategory 'preconceptions about art and visual culture lessons'. These were also identified and specified within variables, such as age, gender, and ethnicity. This helped me identify similarities and differences in children's ideas about, for example, how TV programmes influence their audiences. (v) Finally, I reviewed and revised the sub-themes and framed them into the five themes used in the chapter for case study data interpretation. For example, sub-theme about 'TV experiences as lesson content' and 'objections to lesson content' were consolidated into the theme 'telenovelas and *Barbie* animated films as art curriculum content' (Appendix, 23).

5.2.7 Ethical Considerations

As with any inquiry that seeks to elicit data from people in the real world, their permission had to be obtained. In this instance, it was obtained directly from the head-teacher and classroom teachers at the school and indirectly from the parents of the children. They were informed in advance through written letters about my professional identity and the aims and procedures of the second part of the research together with expected benefits of the inquiry

overall (Appendix 19). The headteacher and classroom teachers were also contacted beforehand, by telephone, in order to arrange a time to visit their classes and implement the lessons. Special care was taken in the selection of the segments of telenovela and *Barbie* animated film used as visual resources for the art lessons to ensure they did not convey messages of violence or sex. An attempt was made to give participant children ‘credible meaningful explanation’ (Cohen *et al*, 2000, p.52) of the research intentions, procedures and expected benefits, and they were informed the aims of the lessons during an introductory session on 22 February 2007. I explained that the data they provided for my research would be confidential and used only for the purposes of a PhD inquiry. The children were also given ‘a real and legitimate opportunity to say that they did not want to take part’ in the lessons (Cohen *et al*, 2000, p.52). I also ensured them that participation in the lessons would not contribute to their term or final assessment. To ensure anonymity, code names were used for the school, the teachers and children. After collecting and analysing the data, I promised to inform the teachers and head-teacher of the outcomes of the research orally and give everybody involved in both parts of the research a brief written summary of findings after the conclusion of the research.

5.3 PILOTING RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

According to Yin (1994), piloting data collection instruments is important because it helps researchers to refine them and gain insights into basic issues being studied. But piloting the whole series of lesson plans was impractical because it would have been too time consuming. Instead, I developed a single lesson plan called ‘Telling a Story’ with similar student learning objectives (Appendix 18). I chose to discuss and interpret one fine art work with children aged 11-12 rather than a mass media image because I considered this could be more easily achieved in a single thirty-minute art lesson, would not intimidate children and would not react over-enthusiastically. Also I wanted to check how children would respond to an art lesson that did not involve art-making. I considered this might help me explain to them, during the actual lessons, the rationale for interpreting and criticising artworks and visual images. Although engaging children in art interpretation and criticism is common practice in some countries, this rarely happens in Greek primary schools (Christopoulou, 2004; Labitsi, 2000). The main aim was not to pilot the lesson content per se but to test out

the field-note documentation process, writing a researcher's diary, and tape-recording lessons. I also needed to practise teaching a lesson and collecting research data at the same time.

The pilot study took place in primary school X in the Municipality of Athens where the interviews had been piloted. It was conducted on 25 January 2007 during the afternoon programme between 14.00 and 16.30. Ten boys and girls aged 11-12 (Grade 6) participated. According to their teacher, they were of mixed ability. The lesson took place in their own classroom. At the beginning, I introduced myself and explained I needed their help in order to check a lesson I had planned for other primary school children. I also told them I needed to take notes in class and tape-record the lesson in order to help me remember what we said and did and I asked them to keep quiet during the lesson. However, during the lesson a boy asked me what I was writing.

Makis (12 years):	What are you writing, Miss?
Researcher:	I am keeping some notes of what we are doing here.
Makis:	Why?
Researcher:	I need to remember what exactly we did to write a report right afterwards. This will help me improve the lesson plans for the other children.
Makis:	I see!

Before I presented the Gyzis' reproduction *Koukou* (Appendix 18), I asked them what they usually did in art lessons. ['Intro: What's an art lesson for?'/Field-notes (FN), 25.1.07]. They said they drew/painted, or were taught other subjects instead. I explained to them that an art lesson can take the form of talking about an artwork and I invited them to look at, observe and describe a reproduction of a painting by Gyzis called *Koukou*. My notes record that [*Children observe*/ FN, 25.1.07]. *The majority of class time was taken up with conversation about details of the painting. The children described the people portrayed in it, their clothes and the place they lived. They interpreted it was a poor family who lived several years ago. They said that the family members were playing with the infant, made comparisons with their own family life, and narrated the story of the painting* (Researcher's Diary, RD, 25.1.07). Regarding the artist's intention, some children said he wanted to portray a *happy family* (FN, 25.1.07), while others thought he wanted to let viewers know 'how life was in

the old times'. At the end of the lesson, the children summarised their thoughts and ideas and retold the story of the painting.

The field-notes I kept during this lesson consisted of jottings of salient points about individual children and the classroom, their behaviour and interaction with classmates and me, short conversational excerpts and descriptions of activities. For example, children commented on each other's responses about the artist's intention and laughed when a boy said that it was impossible to know what Gyzis thought when he made the painting. However, they did not record enough information about my own role and actions as a teacher and researcher. This probably happened because my attention was concentrated on the children's behaviour and responses.

The field-notes were reworked later the same day into the researcher's diary as a 'thick description' of the lesson that included comments, thoughts, and a critical reflection on my role as teacher-researcher. For example, about motivating children I wrote: *I think I managed to motivate children. I praised their contribution and gave feedback at the end. For example, when the children laughed at Nicos' comment about artist intentions I supported his view that the artist indeed did not tell us about his intentions and encouraged him to think possible reasons for making this painting. This enabled Nicos as well as other children to think and make suggestions...* The entry was written in English and this was helpful when coming to report the pilot test as I did not have to translate it. Writing it helped me to practise and gain some confidence in recording and reporting the intervention. It also allowed me to think through more carefully details of my instructions and what needed to be done to improve it. For example, I needed to explain better the rationale of the lesson and make its objectives explicit. Tape-recording the intervention also proved useful for further evaluation purposes.

In my role as a teacher, I felt obliged to help children achieve the objectives I had set for this lesson. I wanted to teach them that artists intend viewers to read their work in certain ways, and help them create their own narratives based upon Gyzi's artwork. So, it was important to empower children to search for possible answers. I believe I managed to engage them in the

lesson activities, motivate them and increased their participation by giving them substantial feedback. As a researcher, I tried to keep field-notes systematically, although this proved to be a difficult task alongside teaching. The decision to tape-record the intervention was important because when I listened to it later it reminded me of details that were important. I concluded that the field-notes, tape recording and researcher diary all functioned efficiently to enable me to describe, analyse and evaluate what happened in the lessons and reflect on my dual role as teacher-researcher.

CHAPTER 6

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this Chapter I describe the implementation of the second part of this research in chronological order and provide evidence of what happened drawing on the lesson plans (LP), field-notes (FN), researcher diary (RD), and tape recordings. The case study consisted of independent interventions in two different primary school classrooms. The aim was to establish children's understanding about the intentions of the makers/producers of telenovelas and *Barbie* animated films. It also sought to determine the extent to which they understood the ways such programmes and films influenced their desires, fantasies, and construction of self-concepts. Discussion of lessons in Grades 5 and 6 is presented in parallel because the children followed the same instructions and I asked them the same questions in the same order. I anticipated that this would help to better highlight any significant differences in children's attitudes and understanding and in my own teaching. Table I (p. 194) summarises the learning objectives and activities for each lesson to enable readers to understand what happened overall as they read the narrative account.

6.2 RESEARCH CONTEXT

This section of this chapter gives background information about school C, and describes the student population and social background, the learning environment, and classroom teachers' practices in art.

6.2.1 School

School C is situated near the centre of Athens. A hundred and twenty children, sixty-two boys and fifty-eight girls, attended it in the academic year 2006-07. According to the school records, 40% of them were first or second generation immigrants. The majority (60%) were categorised by the school as middle class. Six generalist teachers, the headteacher, a music teacher and a physical education teacher worked in the morning programme 08.00-13.40 at school C. There was another teacher responsible for a reception class (*Taksee Ypodochees*) for immigrant students who experienced difficulties with Greek language. All the teachers, like elsewhere in Greece, were obliged to follow the national curriculum but they were free to choose whatever teaching methods they considered appropriate for achieving their goals.

6.2.2 Students

Grade 5 had twenty children, eleven boys and nine girls, aged 10-11. Half of them were of Greek origin. The remainder were from Albania, Egypt, Poland and Ukraine. One girl was a newcomer and could not read or write in Greek language. According to the teacher, four children, three boys and one girl, had learning difficulties and could not read properly. He described his class as a quiet one in comparison to Grade 6. He said that the attainment level was not very good and added that the majority of the children could not write a well-structured essay. He complained that the parents did not care enough about their sons and daughters' progress as they rarely came to ask him about them. He also mentioned that immigrant parents in particular did not show up at parents' day arranged once every three months. Regarding their social background, the majority of children's parents who were of Greek origin were middle class, while the immigrants were working class.

Grade 6 had seventeen children, nine boys and eight girls, aged 11-12. Ten of them were of Greek origin. The remainder were from Albania, and one was from Egypt. An Albanian boy who walked on crutches was a newcomer and could only understand a few Greek words. However, he seemed to have a lot of friends among the boys. According to the classroom teacher and headteacher, Grade 6 was the most undisciplined class in the school. The headteacher explained that this probably happened because they had many teachers in Grade

1 and 2. Similarly to Grade 5, the majority of the children's parents of Greek origin were middle class, while the immigrants were working class.

6.2.3 Learning Environment

The classroom for Grade 5 was located on the second floor, while for Grade 6 was on the ground floor. There was a large bookcase with student and teacher schoolbooks and papers, a small cork board made on which children pinned essays and a large chalkboard in each classroom. But there were no computers or projectors in any of them. The walls in the classroom for Grade 5 were covered with posters of landscapes in Greece and geographical maps but no decorations or drawings by children. In comparison, the walls in classroom for Grade 6 were covered with maps, craft objects (scarecrows) and drawings made by children. In both classrooms, the teacher's desk and chair were placed in the front of the room. This enhanced quick and easy monitoring of class. The children were seated in pairs at tables. These were arranged in three rows of four tables. Although the physical setting communicated a strong message about teacher authority and a teacher-centred educational model, the disorderly and badly-maintained rows gave me the impression the children were not very disciplined. During the intervention, I also noticed that the children in both Grades were not seated at specific desks. They moved around the class and changed seats. This made it difficult for me to learn their names.

6.2.4 Existing Art Education Practice

During the group interviews the majority of teachers in school C told me they asked children to draw/paint topics in art lessons related to language or history subjects or to colour-in prepared sheets. A few said that they used the time allocated to art education for supplementary teaching in other school subjects. Only one teacher said she occasionally taught aspects of art history to her class related to topics in language or history subjects.

The Grade 5 teacher told me that he used the time allocated for art lessons in the national curriculum for drawing or painting with coloured pencils or markers and paper construction. However, he admitted that in several instances this time was used for history or science. This was confirmed later by the children who told me: 'We do not do any art'; 'We do other

subjects. We do science, history, geography, but we do not do any art'. The teacher explained that this was because of the limited time allocated for these school subjects. He also mentioned that teaching time for history and science had been reduced for the school year 2006-07 due to a teachers' strike the previous September and October, which lasted one month.

According to the Grade 6 teacher, art lessons took place towards the end of the school programme. He said he tried to engage children in art activities like drawing, painting, collage, and construction with paper, but they were not interested. He emphasised that all the children in his class were very clever but, unfortunately, they misbehaved during lessons and did not want to do much in art. He showed me their drawings and wondered if they looked like drawings made by children aged 11-12. He seemed disappointed and mentioned that the school policy did not promote art education. This teacher did not mention anything at all about teaching art history, art criticism or aesthetics.

It was clear from these discussions that teachers in school C, especially in Grades 5 and 6, did not plan and implement a structured, balanced and enriching curriculum giving students opportunities to achieve the stated aims of the national curriculum. Neither did they allow students the opportunity to understand the social and cultural nature of art. Neglect of art appreciation, art history, and art criticism resulted in children having limited experiences of what an art lesson should be which I considered was an impediment to the planned lessons.

6.3 IMPLEMENTATION

6.3.1 Setting Up the Intervention

I contacted the headteacher of school C by telephone on 5 February because an accident had kept her at a hospital. As she knew me from the first part of the research, she gave me permission to meet the classroom teachers and children in Grades 5 and 6 on 22 February, explain the research to them, and arrange the dates for teaching the lesson unit.

Both classroom teachers agreed that I needed to start the lessons right away due to the Easter holidays which begun on April. I invited them to stay and observe the lessons but no one

wanted to. Both teachers provided me with information about their classes and art teaching practice. So, I delivered the intervention between 22 February and 26 March 2007 (Table H).

Table H: Intervention Schedule

DATES	CLASS 1	CLASS 2	TIME
22 February	Meeting with Teachers		1 hour
	Introductory session	Introductory session	20 minutes
1 March 2007	Lesson 1: <i>Deconstructing telenovela Anipotaktes Kardies</i>	Lesson 1: <i>Deconstructing telenovela Anipotaktes Kardies</i>	40 minutes
8 March 2007	Lesson 2: <i>Deconstructing telenovela Anipotaktes Kardies</i>	Lesson 2: <i>Deconstructing telenovela Anipotaktes Kardies</i>	40 minutes
15 March 2007	Lesson 3: <i>Deconstructing Barbie animated films</i>	Lesson 3: <i>Deconstructing Barbie animated films</i>	40 minutes
22 March 2007	Lesson 4: <i>Deconstructing Barbie animated films</i>	Lesson 4: <i>Deconstructing Barbie animated films</i>	40 minutes
26 March 2007	Lesson 5: Evaluation	Lesson 5: Evaluation	40 minutes

Table I: Lesson Schedule

LESSONS		OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES
Induction Lesson			
1	Induction (22/2/07)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform children about the lessons and purpose of the research. • Determine children's views on art subject • Brief introduction about DTI lessons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce myself. • Class Discussion: 'What an art lesson should be'
Part 1: 'Deconstructing Telenovelas'			
2	1 st Lesson: 'Makers/ Producers' Intentions behind telenovelas' (1/3/07)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn the main characteristics of telenovelas as television genre • Learn about the production process, personnel, and scheduling telenovelas • Understand how audiences are targeted • Understand how illusion of realism is constructed by this kind of TV genre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watching 5 minute video from telenovela • Class discussion • Activity: 'Changing the main plot line of <i>Anipotaktes Kardies</i>' • Practical activity: Writing a summary of scenario
3	2 nd Lesson: 'Social and Cultural Messages' (8/3/07)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand that telenovelas and to extent TV programmes promote certain class representations • Understand that telenovelas and to extent TV programmes carry cultural messages that might influence audiences responses and behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recap • Watching 5 minute video from telenovela • Class discussion • Drawing: 'Future Self'
Part 2: 'Deconstructing Barbie Animated Films'			
4	1 st Lesson: 'Targeting Audiences' (15/3/07)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about the production process and personnel of animated films • Understand how and why the makers of <i>Barbie</i> animated films recycled well-known fairy tales • Understand how realism and fiction (myth) is constructed by this kind of films • Understand how and why makers of these films target at certain audiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recap • Watching <i>Barbie</i> animated film extract (36:30-41:30) • Class discussion • Practical activity: Writing a fairytale for animated film
5	2 nd Lesson: 'Desires, Fantasies & Future Dreams' (22/3/07)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand that <i>Barbie</i> animated films promote certain gender representations • Understand that this kind of films communicate cultural values • Understand that this kind of films can influence viewers' desires and future dreams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recap • Watching <i>Barbie</i> animated film extract (36:30-41:30) • Class Discussion • Drawing: Comic Strip
Part 3: Evaluation of Student Learning			
6	Evaluation of student learning (26/3/07)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student learning evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completing multiple choice worksheet • Filling in 'I learned....' Statement

6.3.2 Induction Session

After meeting the classroom teachers on 22 February 2007 I asked for extra time to introduce myself to the children and inform them about the lessons and purpose of the research. They both allowed me use 15 to 20 extra minutes of their next teaching periods. The children in both Grades had already been informed about my visit and were expecting me. The field-notes I kept confirm this: [*Children are expecting me. Questions about me and if I stay./* FN, Gr.5]. The children in both Grades appeared excited by the fact that a new teacher had come to teach art because they *asked who I was, how long I planned to stay at their school and about the kind of lessons we would do together* (RD, Gr.6). I explained who I was and the purpose of my visits. *I told them that we would do the art subject for four weeks and that I was going to tape-record everything in order to remember details later on* (RD, Gr.6). I also *assured them that everything we said would remain confidential and their names would not be revealed under any circumstances* (RD, Gr.5). I also asked them to briefly introduce themselves to me.

Children in both grades seemed intimidated by the project. I asked them what they usually did in art lessons. The ones in Grade 6 said they usually drew, painted or did crafts and showed me examples of work pinned on the corkboard. The Grade 5 children, on the other hand, told me the time for art lessons was usually used for other school subjects.

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Chara: (Gr.6): | We usually draw something. |
| Timos (Gr.6): | We draw, paint or we make things |
| Marina (Gr.6): | We did these scarecrows (she points the corkboard). They are from paper. Our teacher showed us how to make them. |
| | |
| Nikos (Gr.5): | We do several things. Sometimes he (the teacher) tells us to cut up paper. And when we do other subjects, we do other things. |
| Mary (Gr.5): | We don't do any crafts |
| Lena (Gr.5): | We do other subjects but we don't do any art. We do history, science, or geography but we don't do any art. |

I asked them to think about and tell me what an art lesson is for. The children in both Grades associated art lessons with creative practical work, painting and drawing. Some boys and girls from Grade 5 thought it was about exploring seasonal themes in paintings or drawings. For example, Menios (Gr.5) said: 'normally we should draw/paint according to the season that is

now. If it is raining we should draw/paint something about rain'. Because no children mentioned art interpretation or criticism *I explained that in an art lesson we can talk about an artwork e.g. when it is made, the artist, its meanings, etc* (RD, Gr.6).

In the introduction I tried link the content of art lessons to their responses to the group interviews conducted the previous year and reminded children I had visited their school before. Two boys and a girl in Grade 6 and one boy in Grade 5 remembered this and explained what had happened then to their classmates.

Tasos (Gr.6): I think we talked about television. What we liked best. Some said they liked *Sto Para Pente*.

Timos (Gr.5): Last time I told you I liked thrillers, like the ones with *Schwarzenegger*.

I informed them of the main findings of the interviews and that the majority of children of all ages liked visual images from TV programmes. *I invited them to name some of the TV programmes these children had talked about* (RD, Gr.6). I told them they mentioned 'football matches', 'athletics' '*SpongeBob Squarepants*', 'TV series like *Vera sto Dexi*', '*Mickey Mouse*', and '*Sto Para Pente*'. Then I asked them to guess what the younger and older children's preferences.

Researcher: What do you think the young children told me?

Chara (Gr.6): *Mickey Mouse*.

Researcher: Those of Grades four and five?

Anne: *Anipotaktes Kardies*.

Stathis: *Sto Para Pente*.

Dimis: Football.

Researcher: Boys talked about football. Can you tell what young girls talked about?

Voices: *Barbie!!!*

I explained I had chosen a TV programme and animated film for these art lessons. After I announced the topic of the two first lessons would be *Anipotaktes Kardies* the majority of children in both Grades shouted out enthusiastically. In Grade 5, two boys and one girl expressed concern because they had never watched this programme. In the field-notes I wrote down: [*Lessons topic. Voices. Concerns and reactions.* /FN, Gr.5]. Another girl, Mirto, said that she wanted to talk about her favourite TV drama *Vera sto Dexi*. In my diary

I wrote that, *one girl and the some boys were disappointed, probably because they didn't like the particular telenovela. Although five boys said they had not watched it, they were aware of its plot* (RD, Gr.6). The majority of the boys in Grade 6 raised objections to the topic in the third and fourth session. Nicolas, for example, complained this was gender discrimination: 'these are only for girls'. However, the majority of Grade 5 children did not complain. In my diary I wrote: *I felt that some boys were not very happy about the topic I had chosen in 3rd and 4th lesson. However, no one complained about this. I suppose they didn't question my right to choose this because I was the teacher* (RD, Gr.5). I explained to both Grades that *Anipotaktes Kardies* was very much favoured by children at the four different schools where I carried out the interviews. I also told them I chose the *Barbie* animated film deliberately *to see if the boys were clever enough to find out why young girls are obsessed with such films* (RD, Gr.6). Finally, *I made it clear that it was not possible to talk about everything they watched on TV* (RD, Gr.5). The session ended in asking children to watch one of the next episodes of *Anipotaktes Kardies* and think about its plot.

6.3.3 Part 1: 'Deconstructing Telenovelas'

1st Lesson: 'Makers/Producers' Intentions behind Telenovelas

Learning objectives	Learning Activities	Key resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn the main characteristics of telenovelas as television genre • Learn about the production process, personnel, and scheduling telenovelas • Understand how audiences are targeted • Understand how illusion of realism is constructed by this kind of TV genre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watching 5 minute video from telenovela • Class discussion • Activity: 'Changing the main plot line of <i>Anipotaktes Kardies</i>' • Practical activity: 'Writing a summary of scenario 	Extract from <i>Anipotaktes Kardies</i>

I wrote down in my diary that: *Before starting the lesson I read the student learning objectives written on the chalkboard during the break-time and asked children think about them* (RD, 1/3/07, Gr.6).

Activity 1: Watching Telenovela's 5 Minute Video

At the beginning of the lesson I asked children to watch a five minute extract from the telenovela *Anipotaktes Kardies (Rebelde Way)* I had downloaded from YouTube. It showed

Mia and *Pablo* having an argument, some boys chatting at the school's coffee shop, and boys and girls resting in the schoolyard after lesson. In the field-notes I wrote: [*Watching extract. Enthusiasm. Talk about characters. Main plot line. /FN, Gr.5*]. Children in both Grades who knew the telenovela were more enthusiastic than those who had not watched it before. They *pointed out the main characters and said who they liked most* (RD, Gr.6). They also *requested to turn on the sound so they could listen to actors/actresses' voices* (RD, Gr.5). I asked them to briefly narrate the main plot of the series so that everybody understood what it was about.

Figures: 22a-22d: Images from 5-minute video extract of *Anipotaktes Kardies*



Activity 2: Class Discussion

After we had watched the video, I asked the children what kind of programme *Anipotaktes Kardies* was and where it was produced. Children in Grade 5 described it as ‘a movie that has excitement’, ‘a series’, and ‘a series with several episodes’. Children in Grade 6 all agreed with their classmate Tasos’s definition. He said: ‘It’s a TV series. It’s a series of episodes on TV either weekly or daily. It always has a scenario (plot) which all the actors/actresses, the cast, follow’. I told the children this kind of TV series is called a ‘telenovela’ and wrote the term on the chalkboard. I asked them if they knew where *Anipotaktes Kardies* had been produced. My field-notes recorded the comment: [*Talking about production country of telenovela: Argentina./FN, Gr.5*]. The majority of children in both Grades knew it was an Argentinean production and some could name the director and producer, Chris Morena. I asked them if they had watched other telenovelas produced in Latin America and could identify commonalities. They mentioned *Floricienta*, *Luna*, *Corina ee Agriogata*, and *Ee Ashimee pou EGINE Omorfee*. They pointed out the common aspects of

their plots were: ‘they have women as leading characters’, ‘are stories of ordinary people’, ‘are about love’, ‘are from Latin America’ and ‘a poor girl falls in love with her boss’. With some guidance the children managed to summarise the main characteristics of telenovelas and identify similarities and differences between *Floricienta* and *Luna* and *Anipotaktes Kardies*. In my field-notes I wrote: [*Similarities: they say they are about poor and rich people and love. Differences: Anipotaktes Kardies are about a group of children, Floricienta, Luna, etc have a woman as main character.*/FN, Gr.6].

Next, I asked children ‘who do you think made this telenovela?’. Grade 5 children *referred to the work of technical team and in particular to camera operators, lighting and sound technicians. After some thought and my guidance, they managed to name the ‘script writer’ and ‘director’* (RD, Gr.5). Only Maria and Christos (Gr.5) mentioned a ‘producer’ and said he is the one who ‘gives the money’ and ‘tries to sell the series’. Grade 6 children not only named different members of technical, production and writing teams but also were aware of their roles and how producers and directors choose actors and actresses.

Takis: (Gr.6):	He [the director] will do something like search.
Marina:	[He tries] to find actors/actresses that fit the characters. He wanted them to be like these children in the telenovela and [he tried] to find actors/actresses who have talent. Like <i>Mia</i> who is conceited, beautiful and touchy. He had to find somebody who was touchy.
Akis:	I believe that this has nothing to do with the attributes of the character that an actress will play. She has to know how to do this, to act.

Discussion continued about telenovela scheduling. My field-notes recorded: [*Scheduling: watching many children*/ FN, Gr.5]. The boys and girls in both Grades said that the TV channel broadcasted the telenovela at noon so that many people, especially children, could watch it. Children in Grade 6 referred to viewing rates. Kostas, for example, said that *Anipotaktes Kardies* was broadcast at noon ‘so that children who come back from school could watch it and increase the viewing rates’. Some children also mentioned revenue a channel gains from broadcasting TV programmes but were unsure how this happens.

Dora (Gr.6):	The channel gains money and viewing rates. From the director.
Researcher:	What do you mean? The director gives them the money?

Tasos: From the AGB rates [the company which measures viewing rates]. For example, *Sto Para Pente* gets 50% more money from the people who watch it. Or, it gets 22%

Researcher: Do you mean that we pay when watching them?

Tasos: In a way. But I don't know how.

I briefly told children that TV channels 'earn money from advertising'. However, we did not discuss this further as it was not a learning objective per se. Another objective for student learning was to understand how audiences are targeted. I asked them to identify the audience for *Anipotaktes Kardies*. Children in both Grades immediately said the makers/producers of this telenovela targeted 'young people', 'adolescents' and 'children aged 10 to 20 years'. A few children said that 'old women who have nothing to do at noon' and 'housewives who have finished their work' also watch the telenovela. Their explanations of why the makers/producers of *Anipotaktes Kardies* targeted young people varied. Some of them explained that 'the main characters are adolescents who go to school', 'it shows adolescents' emotions and how adolescents spend their time in such kind of school', 'they wanted to give us an example' and 'there are not many TV series for children'. Other children's responses revealed confusion about who targeted the audience as they talked about the writing and production teams and channels that broadcast telenovela at noon. For example, Nikolas (Gr.6) explained that 'the children come back tired from school and watch this to relax'. Dina (Gr.6) added that 'this telenovela attracts the attention of children who are tired from school and increases viewing rates'. Similarly Akis (Gr.6) said that the 'producer chooses a time when there is no other series for children'.

In order to enable children understand how this telenovela constructs 'realism' *I asked them to identify 'reality elements' and explain why the maker/producers included them* (RD, Gr.5). Children from both Grades mentioned that an illusion of reality is created by showing places like 'school environments' and 'colleges', or human relationships like the fact that 'somebody loves someone', and 'fights' between telenovela characters. They also tried to explain why these elements were included with comments like:

Stelios (Gr.5): This way the series is more interesting.

Kostas (Gr.6): They used these elements from reality so that the series isn't overdramatic.

Nantia (Gr.6): I think that this way the series is more interesting because we watch something ordinary, out of our lives. We don't watch the series and say 'like it happens in reality!', this is something extraordinary!'. It is more interesting if it is from real life.

Activity 3: Changing the Main Plot Line of *Anipotaktes Kardies*

I asked children to imagine that a different maker/producer had produced this telenovela and describe what would be different and the same. The purpose of this task was to find out if they understood how audiences are targeted and how producers, directors, or scriptwriters make choices. Grade 5 children mainly proposed changes to the context of the telenovela or main character's behaviour:

Yiannis (Gr.5): It could be about some children who attend a school for poor people.

Maria: Like *Chiquititas*, about children in an orphanage.

:

Timos: There could be some children attending a school, but they want to learn, not like the rich ones in *Anipotaktes Kardies*.

The boys and three girls in Grade 6, on the other hand, proposed more action and suspense:

Akis: Like *Chiquititas*, where orphan children were assembled by a man and there was action.

Harry: A scenario that has action. Like *Mazi Sou* (Greek TV drama) that they are always in impasse.

Dina: They could write a scenario influenced by athletics, like the *Incredibles*. This team is very close together and this shows that you can have a real friendship.

Chara (Gr.6) did not respond to my question per se but suggested that music plays important role in TV series. 'I think that sometimes TV series can have music that can touch our feelings. Let's say if there is a happy event the music is joyful, while when something bad happens they put a mournful music that makes us cry'.

Activity 4: Writing a Summary of Scenario

At the end of this lesson the children were asked to produce a written summary of an alternative scenario for a telenovela. They were also asked to describe a target audience and

explain their choice. Grade 5 children experienced difficulty with this. My field-notes contained the following observations: [*They are asking for explanations. Some do not want to write. Others think but do not write anything. Mirto is complaining.*/FN, Gr.5]. I collected only ten scenarios that day and the rest of the children promised to bring them for the next lesson. Five of them never produced any writing and told me this task was too difficult or that they did not have time to do it at home.

The majority tried to alter the plot line of *Anipotaktes Kardies* by copying ideas from other TV programmes or telenovelas they had watched. For example, Lena, Kathrin, Nikos, and Makis produced the following scenario about orphan children. Their idea came from another telenovela called *Chiquititas*.

There are some children who live in an orphanage and they want to go away secretly. It is a series for adolescents and children (Kathrin, Gr.5).

I would make this series with the same actors/actresses but I would shoot it in an orphanage. The parents of these children would have died and they would live in an orphanage where they would fight each other, make jokes.... This series would aim at an audience of adolescents and youth.....(Nikos, Gr.5).

Lila and Timos recycled the plot of *Anipotaktes Kardies* but added murders and a death.

Once upon a time was Maria Juanita Peres who won a scholarship for a college. The day she went to the college the students welcomed her. From the first day that she walked in she fell in love with Hose Xavientes Manuel. But he didn't fancy her at all because he thought she was an old woman almost dead. This series is for adolescent children because it can give them lessons for life. (Lila, Gr.5).

Mia had split up from many boyfriends and her old boyfriend caught her with her new boyfriend kissing and at night the old boyfriend took a gun and shot her.....It is for children aged up to 12 years, because I like thrillers and I am 11 years. (Timos, Gr.5).

Menios, Stelios, Yiota and Mary's scenario was about poor children attending school, and George, and Xenia repeated the scenario of *Anipotaktes Kardies*. Paul, Christos and Yianni's scenarios did not make any sense because they lacked structure.

Children in Grade 6 had no difficulty writing scenarios for a telenovela. On the contrary, *they appeared to perceive this activity as fun and read their ideas out loud so they could make classmates laugh* (RD, Gr.6). All the Grade 6 children gave titles to their scenarios and suggested the most appropriate time for their telenovela to be broadcast. But two of them

appeared confused by the task because they wrote about the plot line of *Anipotaktes Kardies*. Two more wrote about children living in an orphanage for a scenario targeted at adolescents and adults. The remainder wrote one or other of the following stories: (i) love stories, and about a story of (ii) *a music band*; (iii) *the son of a rich man*; (iv) *love and death*; (v) *the phenomenon of death*; (vi) *boys and girls*; (vii) *a football team*; and (viii) *a man who lived on the road* (titles on essays).

Life and Death

A maid got job in a villa. She fell in love with her rich boss. But when the psycho satanist hears this he tries several satanic ways to kill her. At the end, he kills her at a satanic ceremony. It is intended for children aged 15 and older, because Satanism might influence young children. Time to be broadcast: 2:45 at night. (Akis, Gr.6).

The Daring

It is about a basketball team of children from Argentina. They want to win the cup. The children attend a school in Argentina. This series is made for children aged 9-14 because it has basketball, entertainment, action and suspense. [To be broadcast] 3-4 o'clock [in the afternoon]. (Kate, Gr.6).

The Ocean

It is about the mayor's daughter who falls in love with a poor guy. They run away and board a ship. The ship sinks and they are castaways on an island with cannibalsAt the end the woman dies from snakebite. When the man comes back on a wooden raft, he is 51 years old with long hair and a beard. When he was shipwrecked, he was only 22 years and the young woman was 21. Audience: adolescents, 12-15 years. Time: 22.00. You are going to watch it because it is has love, action, agony (Dora, Gr.6).

2nd Lesson: Social and Cultural Messages in Telenovelas

Learning objectives	Learning Activities	Key resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand that telenovelas and to extent TV programmes promote certain class representations Understand that telenovelas and to extent TV programmes carry cultural messages that might influence audiences responses and behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recap Watching 5 minute video from telenovela Class discussion Drawing: 'Future Self' 	Extract from Anipotaktes Kardies

Activity 1: Recap of 1st Session

After reading the lesson objectives I had written on the chalkboard, I asked the children to summarise what we had talked about in the previous lesson. The following field-notes

provide evidence of this: [*I read objectives. Summary of previous lesson. /FN, Gr.5*]. Grade 6 children briefly went over the main points and used terms like ‘telenovela’, ‘audience targeting’. My field-notes of that day read: [*They are able to summarise & use the term ‘telenovela’ / FN, Gr.6*]. In comparison, those in Grade 5 experienced difficulties and needed guidance in order to remember what we had said. Only few of these children remembered what a telenovela is while *two boys, Paul and Christos looked surprised as if they heard this word for first time. I then briefly summarised the main points of the previous lesson and repeated the definition of ‘telenovela’ (RD, Gr.5).*

Activity 2: Watching Telenovela 5 minute video

I showed again the same telenovela five minute video and I asked the children to observe the main characters’ clothing, hairstyles, behaviour and actions, the places they lived or worked.

Activity 3: Class Discussion

Children in both Grades were asked to discuss *how Anipotaktes Kardies portrays social class and whether these portrayals are accurate for Greece* (RD, Gr.5). The children in both Grades talked about the places rich and poor people in the telenovela lived, the clothes they wore, and the money they possessed. They said things like: ‘Rich people are portrayed with style’; ‘they are modern’; ‘poor people have less money’; ‘when a rich woman or man wears something it is a brand name and she wears jewels and make-up, but poor women only dress in trousers and a top’. The majority of Grade 6 children thought that these representations were accurate for Greece. For example, Anne said that these things happen in reality. ‘We see that people are different from the houses they live and the way they dress, in everything in general’ (Anne, Gr.6). The majority of Grade 5 children emphasised the fact that both in telenovelas and reality rich people ‘have lots of money to buy the things they like’ and ‘can spend money’. Two boys adhered to the stereotype that poor people always wear dirty clothes and are like Gypsies. Stelios, for example, said that ‘rich people have clean clothes’ while ‘poor people are like Gypsies’. When I asked him if he was rich, he got confused and could not explain his ideas. His classmate Christos explained that rich people employ other people ‘to do their laundry, to cook for them’.

One of the objectives for the lesson was that children would be able to understand that telenovelas convey cultural messages. *I asked them what the main message of this telenovela was* (RD, Gr.6). Among the ones they mentioned were the following:

- i. ‘adolescents should go to university in order to learn and study so they can do something important in their lives’;
- ii. ‘you should not misbehave with your teachers like these children do’;
- iii. ‘poor people have ability and potential’;
- iv. ‘school can be fun as well’;
- v. ‘rich and poor people have the same rights and obligations’.

The children in Grade 6 appeared to empathise with the poor boy in the telenovela who earned the scholarship. Harry, for example, mentioned that ‘he cannot be compared with the other boy who pays’.

I asked the children if they wanted to be like one of the characters in *Anipotaktes Kardies* or lead a similar life and give reasons for their responses. All the children in both Grades were keen to answer this question. As expected, the majority of girls wanted to be like *Mia* because she was ‘rich’, ‘beautiful’ ‘skinny’ and ‘had long hair’. Lena (Gr.5) also said that if she was like her she ‘could go wherever she liked and with whichever boy she liked’. Mary (Gr.5), on the other hand, claimed that if she was like *Mia* she ‘would read more to become something’. The majority of Grade 5 boys said they wanted to be like *Manuel* because he was ‘a poor guy who studies and learns’; ‘is modest and goes to the college because he earned this’; ‘is handsome and all the girls fall in love with him’. However, Menios said he would like to be like Pablo who is rich so that he could go to parties without asking his parents. The majority of Grade 6 boys showed more self-confidence than their female classmates. I wrote in my diary that *they said they did not want to be like these characters because either they did not like any of them or they liked themselves as they were now*.

Akis (Gr.6):	I don’t want to be like them because all of them are more or less crack-brained.
Takis:	I agree with Akis. I don’t like the characters I have seen.
Tasos:	I don’t like any of them. I don’t want to be like them. I like the way I am.

I asked the children whether this particular telenovela influenced their life plans in any way or made them dream their future selves (RD, Gr.5). The majority of boys and girls in Grade 5 said their dreams were about ‘studying at university’, ‘making a family’, or glamorous careers like being a ‘singer’ or ‘model’. Only a few boys and girls in Grade 6 responded to this question and said they wanted to earn money or be famous. My field-notes recorded that the remainder appeared to hesitate or be unwilling to share their future dreams.

Activity 4: Drawing my Future Self

The last activity involved practical art work. In the diary I wrote: *I asked the children to draw their future self, explain what their drawing is about and write down the name of a TV programme that might have influenced them (RD, Gr.5). Some children in both Grades raised objections to the task and said they did not want to draw. In the field-notes for Grade 5 I wrote down: [Objections. They talk all together. I raised my voice. Misunderstandings and more explanations]. Their excuses were that they did not like drawing at all, or did not know what they were supposed to do. However, as I wrote in the researcher diary they produced some work but continued to misbehave after I had explained the task once again and stressed its importance (RD, Gr.6).*

Grade 5 children’s imagined selves were clearly influenced by TV programmes like *Floricienta*, *Tees Agapees Maheria*, *Sto Para Pente*, *Maria ee Ashimee*, and *Anipotaktes Kardies* which aimed at an adolescent or adult audience. The majority of the boys imagined themselves as ‘detectives’, ‘spies’ or ‘fighters’ (Fig. 23-25).

Examples of Male selves

Figure 23: Stelios, Gr.5

A Spy, pencil

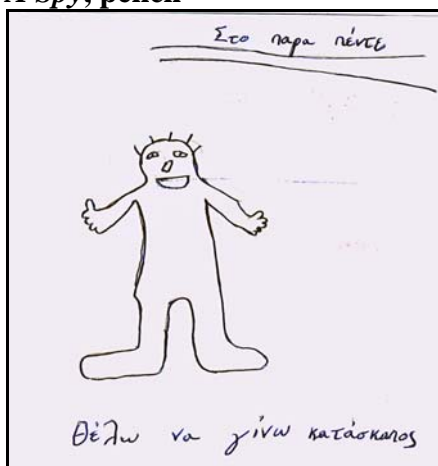


Figure 24: Lakis, Gr.5

Fighters, pencil



Figure 25: Timos, Gr.5, James Bond, pencil



Girls in Grade 5 envisioned their future selves as ‘brides’ (Fig. 26), ‘singers’ (Fig. 27) or ‘rich heiresses’ (Fig. 28). They wrote that they were influenced in this by telenovelas such as *Floricienta* and TV dramas like *Sto Para Pente* targeted at a general audience.

Examples of Female Selves

Figure 26: Mary, Gr.5
Bride & groom, pencil & pen



Figure 27: Yiota, Gr.5
A singer, pencil

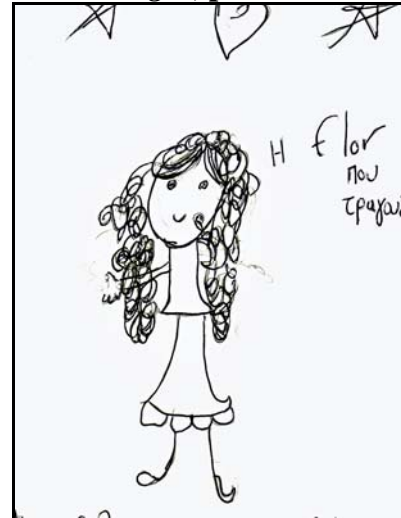


Figure 28: Lila, Gr.5, Rich heiress, pencil



Whereas the majority of Grade 6 children did draw future selves and mentioned TV programmes that influenced their dreams they did not write down any comments. Their self-constructs appeared to be influenced not only by TV programmes for general audience like *Sto Para Pente* and *50-50*, but also by animated cartoons like *SpongeBob Squarepants* and *The Simpsons*. Three boys' drawings showed influences from the Japanese anime TV series *Naruto*. They not only recycled the graphic style of this anime but also portrayed themselves as ninja fighters (Fig. 29).

Figure 29a: Akis, Gr.6
***Naruto: Ninja of Konoha*, pencil**

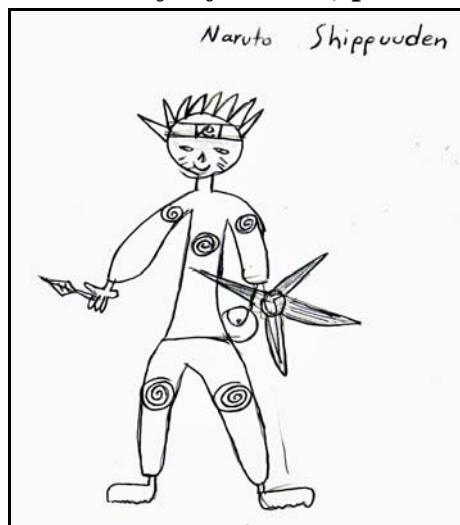


Figure 29b: Tasos, Gr.6
***Me as Naruto*, pencil**



Takis (Gr.6) related his vision of a future self to *Anipotaktes Kardies* and depicted himself with huge muscles (Fig. 30). Similarly, Kostas dreamt he was a muscular guy riding a bike with a girlfriend. The TV drama *Tees Agapees Maheria* he mentioned has a main character that looks exactly like this (Fig. 31). Nikolas' future dream was to be a footballer and he mentioned the telenovela *Anipotaktes Kardies* (Fig. 32).

Examples of Male Selves (Gr.6)

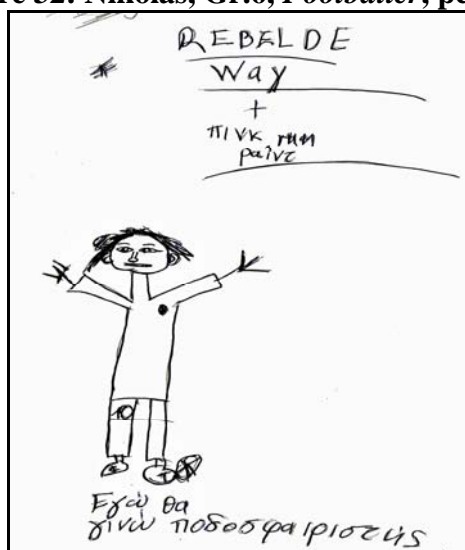
Figure 30: Takis, Gr.6
I'm doing muscles, pen



Figure 31: Kostas, Gr.6
Me on a bike, pencil



Figure 32: Nikolas, Gr.6, Footballer, pencil



The majority of girls in Grade 6 drew future selves resembling the main characters in telenovelas *Anipotaktes Kardies* and *Maria ee Ashimee*, and the TV drama *Sto Para Pente* but did not write down any comments or explanations (Fig. 34, 35 and 36).

Examples of Female Selves (Gr., 6)

Figure 33: Nadia, Gr.6
Police Officer, pencil

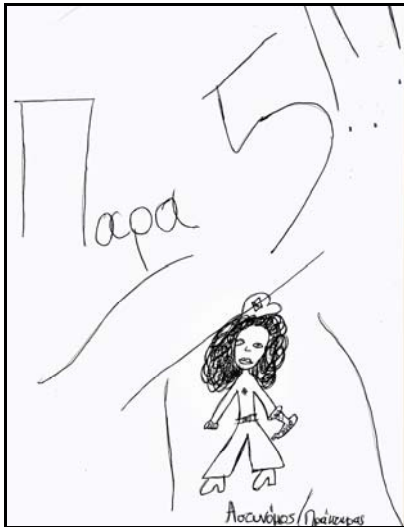


Figure 34: Kate, Gr.6, Anipotaktes
Kardies, markers and pencil

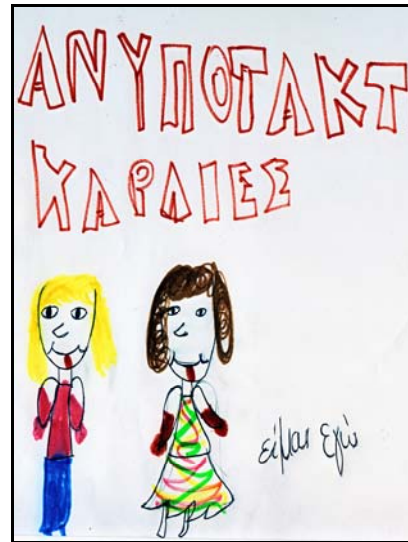


Figure 35: Dora, Gr.6, Maria the Ugly, pencil



6.3.4 Part 2: ‘Deconstructing Barbie Animated Films’

1strd Lesson: ‘Targeting Audiences’

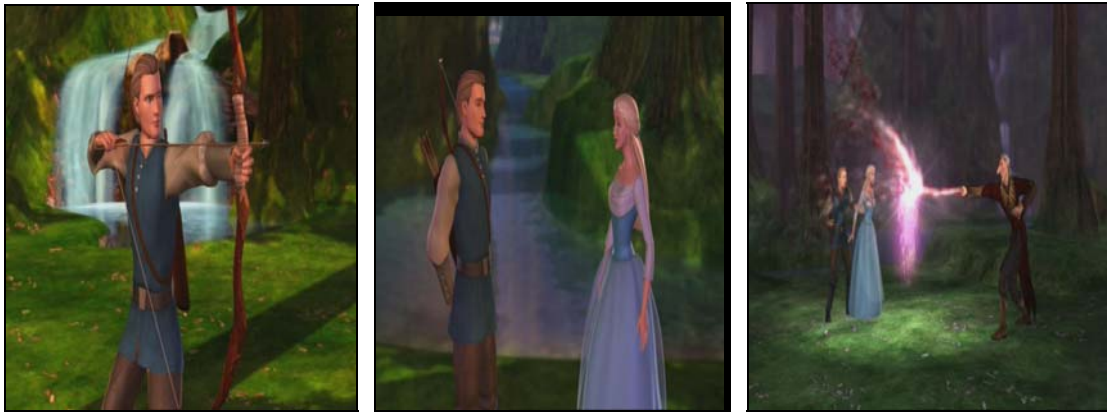
Learning objectives	Learning Activities	Key resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learn about the production process and personnel of animated films• Understand how and why the makers of <i>Barbie</i> animated films recycled well-known fairy tales• Understand how realism and fiction (myth) is constructed by kind of films• Understand how and why makers of these films target at certain audiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recap• Watching <i>Barbie</i> animated film extract (36:30-41:30)• Class discussion• Practical activity: Writing a fairytale for animated film	Extract from <i>Barbie of Swan Lake</i> film

As with previous sessions, I wrote student learning objectives on the chalkboard and read them out. Boys in both Grades complained that I had chosen TV programmes and movies ‘only for girls’. In trying to persuade them of their importance *I repeated that I wanted them to discuss this as it was young girls’ preferences* (RD, 15/3/07, Gr.6).

Activity 1: Watching *Barbie of Swan Lake* extract

I showed them a five-minute extract of *Barbie of Swan Lake* (Fig. 36a-36c) in which wizard Rothbart attacks Odette and Prince Daniel in the magic forest. I asked if they knew anything about this film. The girls in Grade 6 said they had watched it and knew the title and main plot line. The majority of girls and only one boy in Grade 5 admitted they had watched *Barbie* animated films in the past or still did ‘when *Alter* TV channel broadcasts them’. [The following remark was written in my field notes: *Watch Barbie films. 1 boy says yes. He likes them./FN, Gr.5*].

Figures 36a-36c: Images from 5 minute extract *Barbie of Swan Lake*



Activity 2: Class Discussion

One lesson objective was to *learn about the production process and personnel of Barbie animated films* (LP). Grade 5 children knew and used the terms ‘director’, ‘script writer’, ‘producer’, ‘sound technician’, and ‘cameraman’. They also knew that this kind of film is made ‘with computers’. Milto mentioned that ‘an artist drew the figures first’ and Mary added that actors/actresses ‘gave their voices’. Similarly, Grade 6 children knew about production, writing, and technical teams. As I noted in my diary: *Some children said that an artist first drew the main characters and settings and then an animator worked to make the film* (RD, Gr.6).

When I asked them if they knew who *Barbie* was, some children appeared confused. They said she was ‘a poster’ or ‘a doll’. When Takis (Gr.6) said she was ‘an American woman 40 years old’, the girls corrected him saying she was a doll. The children in both Grades appeared to experience difficulty understanding why *Mattel Inc* had decided to produce these films. My field-notes commended: *[They experience difficulty in making associations. They cannot find a reason why M[attel] makes these films/ FN, Gr.6]*. As this was not a learning objective per se, I decided to carry on the lesson and if I had time to ask children think again about this. Another learning objective was to *understand why the makers of Barbie animated films reused well-known fairytales or stories* (LP). In the diary I wrote that *I invited them to think about the plot line of Barbie of Swan Lake and tell me if they knew anything about this story* (RD, Gr.5). The children in Grade 6 told me that ‘it

was Mozart's' or 'it was a fairytale that Mozart make into a ballet'. Similarly, Grade 5 children told me that *Swan Lake* 'was a fairytale'. I explained to both classes that this was a ballet composed by Tchaikovsky and asked them why they thought the makers/producers of this film used this story and did not write a new one. I wrote about this in the diary as follows: *Since they did not know who created the Swan Lake, I told them it was Tchaikovsky's composition and that the music in the film was from this ballet* (RD, Gr.5).

The children in both Grades emphasised the fact that this story was 'like a fairytale' and was 'about a poor girl who works in a bakery shop but the man she will love later on is a prince'. Since the learning objective was to understand *how realism and fiction (myth) is constructed in this kind of film* [LP], I asked children to identify realistic and fictional elements and give reasons why the makers/producers included them. My field-notes recorded that we discussed about [*Myth, fantasy, magic, love*/ FN, Gr.5]. The children in both Grades identified (i) 'fantasy' and (ii) 'magic' as fictional elements: 'They put in animals that do not exist like unicorns and many other' (Yiota, Gr.5); 'Magic! People can transform to animals and animals can transform to people' (Timos, Gr.5); 'They used fantasy, in other words, things we cannot see in reality' (Marina, Gr.6). They also mentioned that these elements were intended to attract young girls: 'They put them there for young girls to watch' (Stelios, Gr.5). Children in both Grades associated realism with human relationships and the environment: 'There is love' (Lila, Gr.5); 'Animals are so close to people' (Menios, Gr.5); 'They are getting married' (Dina, Gr.6); 'There are trees like real life, grass, lakes' (Makis, Gr.5). Children in both classes agreed that these elements were included to make 'the film realistic' so that 'it is more vivid and real'.

Another learning objective was to increase children's understanding of *how and why makers/producers of these films target at certain audiences* (LP). So, *I asked children to identify the audience for Barbie animated films and try to give reasons why the makers/producers targeted it* (RD, Gr.6). They all agreed that these films targeted young girls. They tried to explain this with comments such as: 'Because there is a woman, *Barbie*, who dresses nicely like a doll, like a woman, and she always falls in love with

someone, especially with princes' (Chara, Gr.6). 'Because girls like stories with magic and love affairs' (Stelios, Gr.5).

Activity 3: Writing a Fairytale for an Animated Film

A writing activity was planned for the end of the lesson. It was designed to increase children's understanding of how audiences are targeted and why makers recycle well-known fairytales, or stories to achieve their purposes. *I asked children to think of a story or fairytale they knew or liked, change it and write a summary of a scenario for an animated film* (RD, Gr.6). I also asked them to write about which audience it was aimed at. The majority of children in Grade 5 said this task was too difficult and started complaining that they had done a writing task in the previous lesson. In the field-notes I commented that: *[They all talk together, complain it is too difficult and ask if we can do something else /FN, Gr.5]*. Although I tried to explain the task, they appeared unwilling to do it and insisted on doing something else. So, I decided to let them.

I asked them to talk about how a different film maker/producer would produce this film and how it would have changed if the plot or characters were different (RD, Gr.5). The majority of children in Grade 5 said that the makers/producers could only 'do a film for boys'. Timos suggested that 'they could get the magician to play *Yu-Gi-Oh* cards with his sister towards the end of the film'. Only a few girls participated in the discussion. Maria suggested that *SpongeBob Squarepants* could be the main character of an animated film but could not think of a plot line. To help her, Lena suggested 'he could play *Spiderman*'. Stelios liked this idea and added that he could 'jump from house to house and save the world'.

The rationale for replicating the same lessons in two classes was to compare children's responses. In Grade 6 the children who were badly behaved and talked to each other started shouting out all together and I could not make sense of what they said. In the field-notes I wrote: *[Noise. Cannot hear what I say. Me shouting for quiet. They continue to speak all together /FN, Gr.6]*. After I managed to reinforce discipline, which only lasted for a while, a few boys and girls attempted to respond to this task. Harry suggested that the

‘film could have car races’ and described one car race he had watched on TV. Akis said that ‘if a company had a toy it could put it in the film’ but did not give an example. Dora suggested that ‘*SpongeBob Squarepants* or *Bugs Bunny* could play the *Little Red Ridding Hood*’ and that ‘he could be dressed in red holding a basket’. *After Dora’s suggestions, everybody in the class laughed and started misbehaving again till the bell rang* (RD, Gr.6).

2nd Lesson: *Desires, Fantasies and Future Dreams*

Learning objectives	Learning Activities	Key resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand that <i>Barbie</i> animated films promote certain gender representations • Understand that this kind of films communicate cultural values • Understand that this kind of films can influence viewers’ desires and future dreams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recap • Watching <i>Barbie</i> animated film extract (36:30-41:30) • Class Discussion • Drawing: Comic Strip 	Extract from <i>Barbie of Swan Lake</i> film

Activity 1: Recap

I asked children to summarise the main points from the previous session about audience targeting and production of *Barbie* animated film. My field-notes recorded: [*They did all remember what we said.* /FN, Gr.5]. The majority of children in both Grades remembered everything we had discussed about production teams in *Barbie* animated movies and target audiences.

Activity 2: Watching *Barbie of Swan Lake* Extract

I asked them to watch the same extract of the *Barbie of Swan Lake* film again and *told them to observe how the main characters were represented, their attitudes and behaviour* (RD, Gr.6).

Activity 3: Class Discussion

The first activity was designed to enable children to understand how *Barbie* animated films represent gender. So, *I began asking them how men and women were represented in this film* (RD, Gr.5). The children in both Grades commented on their physical appearance. In the field-notes I wrote: [*They talk about appearance: outfit, beauty, old-fashioned clothes/*

FN, Gr.5]. The girls talked about the ‘nice’, ‘big’ dresses women wear. Chara and Marina (Gr.6) defined these dresses as ‘classic’ and distinguished them from the ‘modern ones we wear’. Kathrin (Gr.5) also said that women characters ‘are beautiful and elegant like princesses’. Regarding male representations, Harry (Gr.6) said that ‘they are portrayed like princes and kings, they own castles, wear nice clothes and crowns, and are handsome’. Nikos (Gr.5) on the other hand, said that men are represented ‘like peasants’, while Menios (Gr.5) said they are represented like ‘soldiers with weapons who beat the bad people’.

The children commented on how *Barbie* animated films portrayed ‘good’ and ‘evil’ and that *Barbie* is associated with ‘goodness’. According to Maria (Gr.5), ‘*Barbie*, her family, the prince and the elves are good’ and evil is represented by ‘falcons’ or ‘ugly people’. Yiota (Gr.5) said that ‘good people are always beautiful and bad ones are always ugly’. I asked the children whether these gender representations were accurate. Although they said no, they pointed out that the main difference was that ‘people do not wear this kind of clothes’ and ‘are not rich like *Prince Daniel*’. They also understood that the main purpose of portraying them as kings and queens was ‘that children like this’, and ‘make the film beautiful’, or ‘make it more fantastic’.

Another research/learning objective was to find out if they understood *that Barbie animated films communicate cultural values* (LP). I asked them whether they could identify any ‘ideas/values’ in the *Barbie of Swan Lake* film. My field-notes recorded: [Discussing values: Love, Kindness, goodness. /FN, Gr.5]. The majority of children in both Grades mentioned the ‘ideas/values’ of ‘love’, ‘goodness’ and ‘kindness’ and a few referred to ‘being clever’, ‘having good manners’ and being polite’. Although they appeared to accept the importance of these values in people’s lives, no one explained why. As the last learning objective was to *realise that this kind of films can influence viewers’ desires and dreams about the future* (LP), I asked them what kinds of future aspirations this particular animated film generated in viewers. My notes written during the lesson recorded that: [They talk about young girls only]. The majority of children in both Grades talked about how young girls dream of getting married to a rich man.

Christos (Gr.5):	Because when they grow up they want to become princesses themselves, they want to wear dresses like these, be beautiful, and get marry.
Mirto:	They want to get married to a prince from a fairytale.
Researcher:	Are there princes?
Mirto:	No, but they imagine them.
Researcher:	Do they dream of anything else?
Kathrin:	To marry a rich man!
Menios:	And handsome.

Researcher:	When young girls watch this kind of films/
Kate (Gr.6):	They are encouraged.
Researcher:	To do what?
Kate:	To get married.
Akis:	That the prince with the white horse will come
Tasos:	That the prince will come and take them with his white horse.
	What else do they think about? They fancy the prince!

I asked the girls in both Grades if they had ever been influenced personally by Barbie animated films but no one admitted to this (RD, Gr.6). Nadia and Marina (Gr.6) said that ‘this can happen of course to other young girls’. However, a few girls in Grade 5 said that young girls do learn things from these kinds of films: ‘They can learn how to fight in life’ (Lila, Gr.5); ‘Not to give up at the first difficulty (Mary, Gr.5).

Activity 4: Drawing a Comic Strip

I asked the children to *recycle and adapt narratives from fairytales and draw their own version in the form of comic strips* (LP). Once again, they appeared to experience difficulty with this practical task. In the field-notes I wrote: [*They complain it is a difficult task. They’re asking to do something else*]. I explained the task twice and asked them to think of and draw something (RD, Gr.5). Almost half the children in Grade 6 misbehaved during the task and the majority of them did not recycle and adapt narratives from fairytales. Instead they recycled plot lines from the film *300*, which was showing at cinemas at that time, from *Naruto* anime, telenovelas and TV series, animated cartoons like *Looney Tunes*, or *Barbie* animated movies.

Children's Comic Strip Drawings (Gr.6)

Figure 37: Harry, Gr.6, 300, pencil



Figure 38: Tasos, Gr.6, Naruto, pencil

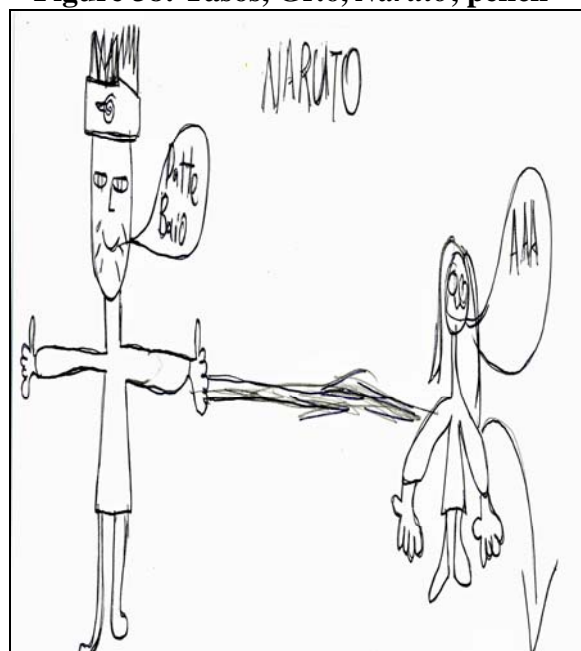


Figure 39: Dina, Gr.6, The Princess, pencil

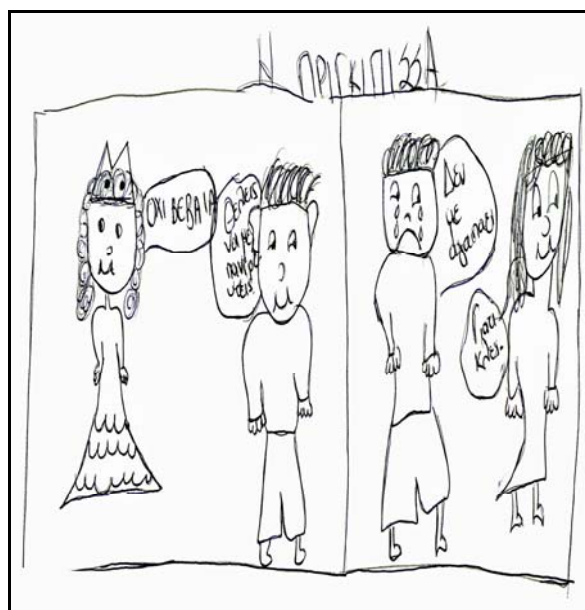


Figure 40: Dora, Gr.6
The Princesses, colour pencils



Figure 41: Chara, Gr.6
Untitled, colour pencils

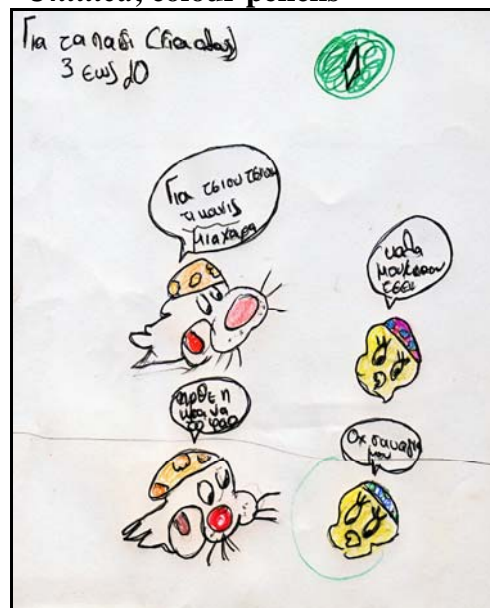


Figure 42: Stathis, Gr.6, Eddie the Killer, pen



Although the majority of children in Grade 5 did recycle fairytales like *The Three little Pigs* and *Cinderella*, they did not change anything in them as I had asked. Only one boy changed the story of the *Little Red Riding Hood*. In her version, the *Little Red Riding Hood* eats the wolf. Four children did not manage to complete the task on time. My field notes

recorded that although *they promised to bring their work to our next session they did not and explained there was not time to complete it at home* (RD, Gr.5).

Examples of Comic Strip Drawings (Gr.5)

Figure 43: Menios, Gr.5, *Little Red Riding Hood*, pencil

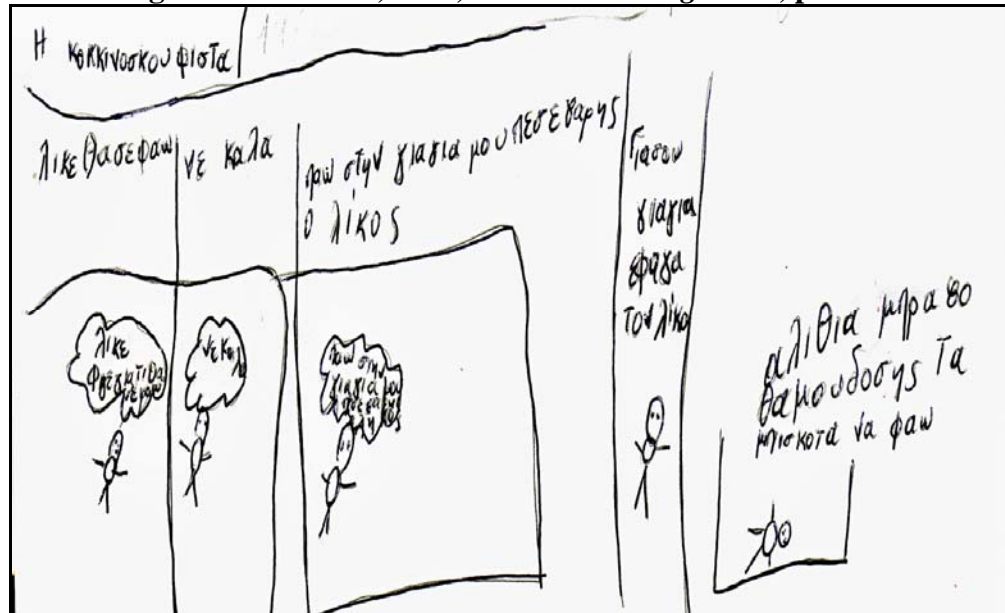
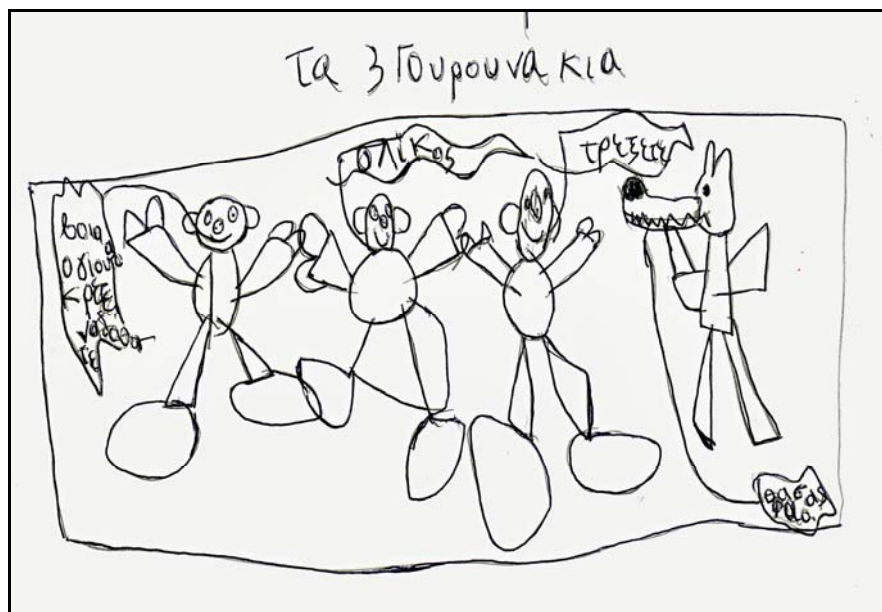


Figure 44: Timos, Gr.5, *The 3 Little Pigs*, pencil



6.3.5 Part 3: Evaluation of Student Learning and Intervention

The last lesson was devoted to evaluation of student learning. *A multiple-choice worksheet was distributed to each individual child* (RD, 26/3/07). The purpose of this task was to establish what they had learned during the past four lessons, and get them reflect on their learning. The evaluation work sheet included questions about the genre of TV series *Maria ee Ashimee*, (*Maria the Ugly*) its audience, realism construction, messages and values communicated and ideas promoted by this. It also included a question about the effect of this TV series on viewers and especially to young boys and girls. Finally, it asked children to complete a self-reflective statement about what they had learned in these art lessons.

I began by explaining that it was important for my research to know what they had learned during the lessons (RD, Gr.5). The majority of Grade 5 children asked if this was a test and would influence their grades. My field-notes commented that: [They were worried about the test and asked if I would tell to their teacher/ FN, Gr.5]. *To make them feel less anxious I told them that I would but it would not affect their grades* (RD, Gr.5). I had been informed beforehand by their teacher that four children had learning difficulties. So, I read the instructions and multiple answers for each question to help them complete the worksheet on time. However, two children stayed in at break time to complete the task. Grade 6 children started working on it immediately, did not need extra help and completed the worksheet within 20 minutes. In my notes I wrote: [They complete the sheet. No one needs help or asks for explanations/ FN, Gr.6].

The first multiple-choice questions asked children to select from given answers the genre of TV series *Maria ee Ashimee*. The options were: ‘animated cartoons’, ‘telenovela’, ‘TV comedy’, and ‘TV drama’. The majority of them in both Grades correctly selected ‘telenovela’ as the right answer. The second question asked the children to select the audience for *Maria ee Ashimee* and gave them the following options: ‘children’, ‘only men’, ‘only women’, ‘adults’ and ‘families’. They correctly identified ‘families’ as the audience for this telenovela. In this they probably took into consideration the fact that *Maria ee Ashimee* is broadcast at evening prime time zone, which means both adults and children watch it. The third question asked children to select from a list of given answers

the elements that construct realism in this telenovela. The list included the following: ‘by presenting’: (a) ‘only rich people’s lives’; (b) ‘specific environments, e.g. a company, a café, etc’; (c) ‘the adventures of a superhero’; (d) ‘people’s feelings and relationships’, ‘differences in people’s appearance’; (e) ‘evil forces to intrude in people’s lives’, (f) ‘ordinary people’s home life’ and (g) ‘other’. The majority of children selected more than one of the statements listed in this question. They answered that this telenovela creates an illusion of realism by showing working environments, human relationships, differences in peoples’ appearances and ordinary people’s lives. Under the section ‘other’, children wrote down: ‘the difficulties ordinary people face’, ‘oppositions between companies’, ‘peoples’ personalities’, and ‘people going to bars and getting drunk’.

The fourth question was an open one that asked children *what kind of messages the particular TV programme carried* (LP). In response, they mainly wrote down about a false message regarding the importance of physical appearance in people’s lives. ‘Even if we are ugly we should not give up the things we want’ (Andreas, Gr.5). ‘Appearance is not important, but character is’ (Lena, Gr.5). ‘Even if someone is very ugly, she/he can make her/his life and have a family’ (Nikos, Gr.5). ‘Appearance does not count, only the emotions do’ (Chara, Gr.6). ‘Some men abandon a beautiful woman for an ugly one’ (Anne, Gr.6). ‘Appearance is not everything. For a job position we want we need to ask for it’ (Kate, Gr.6). ‘We should respect ourselves and the others’ (Maria, Gr.5). ‘To be respectful to your parents’ (Dimis, Gr.6). ‘We should not judge a person from his/her appearance’ (Nikolas, Gr.6).

The fifth question asked children to select from given statements stereotypes they thought this telenovela communicates. The list included: (a) ‘a woman is beautiful when she is well-dressed and takes care of herself’; (b) ‘being beautiful is important for a woman’; (c) ‘you can only be successful if you are beautiful’; (d) ‘ugly people are usually smarter than those who are beautiful’; (e) ‘men are usually heads of companies or have more important jobs than women’; (f) ‘only rich and beautiful people can be loved and find happiness’ and (g) ‘other’. The majority of these children correctly selected more than one answer. They selected the statements about men’s role at work, mental attributes of ugly people and

about the importance of beauty in a woman's life. Also some children in Grade 5 and only two in Grade 6 selected the answer 'a woman is beautiful when she is well-dressed and takes care of herself' as a stereotype promoted by this telenovela. The majority of children in both Grades also wrote down their own comments under the section 'other'. Examples included: 'Rich and poor people and every other man can feel love' (Timos, Gr.5); 'Good people have better positions at work (Nikos, Gr.5); 'Ugly people usually fall for beautiful ones' (Lila, Gr.5); 'Ugly people might be ugly in appearance but can be likeable' (Mirto, Gr.5); 'Beauty is not important but cleverness and emotions are' (Marina, Gr.6); 'Appearance does not make someone happy' (Nadia, Gr.6).

In the sixth multiple-choice question about the social and cultural values conveyed by *Maria ee Ashimee* (*Maria the Ugly*) these children selected more than one answer from a checklist of seven statements. The majority checked the followings: 'being polite'; 'parents should be respected'; 'friendship is important to one's life'. Some also checked 'fighting for your rights is important' and 'ugly people should not be respected'. No child selected any of the following statements: 'money is the most important thing in people's lives', and 'following fashion is important'. These children also wrote their suggestions under the section 'other': 'to be just' (Takis, Gr.6); 'all people deserve to be respected' (Dora, Gr.6); 'respect the people who are more clever than you' (Kate, Gr.6); 'not to be cruel with people' (Nikolas, Gr.6); 'in order to make friends you don't need to look at how they look like' (Anne, Gr.6); 'all people have the same rights' (Dina, Gr.6); 'all people, young, old, beautiful, and ugly should be respected' (Menios, Gr.5); 'don't give up trying if you want something' (Mary, Gr.5).

Question number seven was a true or false one. Table J summarises the children's responses of eight statements included in this question. Only a few children wrote down their own comments at the end. They wrote that these kinds of TV programmes 'give us ideas for the working environment we would like to be' (Nikolas, Gr.6), 'help us to deal with personal matters' (Kostas, Gr.6), 'teach us how to behave' (Chara, Gr.6), and 'help us pass the time' (Kathrin, Gr.5).

Table J: True or False Statements

STATEMENTS:	TRUE	FALSE
Watching TV programmes like <i>Maria ee Ashimee (Maria the Ugly)</i> :		
helps people forget their everyday concerns	13	19
entertains people	27	5
helps people dream about future their selves	24	8
makes people to want to be like the main characters	14	18
helps people decide about the friends they choose	12	20
gives people clues about fashion tips	12	20
makes people desire things (e.g. cars, clothes)	21	11
gives people ideas about how to deal with everyday life problems	19	13

Question eight asked children whether *Maria ee Ashimee (Maria the Ugly)* influences boys and girls of their age and if so how. In response, almost half the Grade 6 boys and girls answered that this TV series did not influence children of their age and the remainder wrote that it did. In contrast, only a few Grade 5 children wrote that this did not influence children, while the majority wrote that it did. Those who answered ‘no’, gave the following reasons: ‘especially the girls do not want to be like *Maria*’ (Dimis, Gr.6); ‘boys and girls of my age are not influenced by this programme because they are not ugly’ (Nikolas, Gr.6); ‘there is age difference and no boy or girl of my age faces such a bad behaviour’ (Tasos, Gr.6); ‘which girl would like to be like her?’ (Harry, Gr.6); ‘it cannot influence them because it does not show anything bad’ (Dina, Gr.6); ‘*Maria* does not harm anybody, she helps the company and does important jobs’ (Christos, Gr.5). Those who thought that the telenovela did influence children explained that: ‘it encourages ugly women to become beautiful’ (Yiannis, Gr.5), ‘it gives them ideas for their future and it may give them self-confidence’ (Makis, Gr.5), ‘some want to be good like *Maria* and others rich like her boss *Mandas*’ (Timos, Gr.5), ‘it gives us ideas about fashion and jobs’ (Marina, Gr.6), ‘it affects their behaviour’ (Akis, Gr.6).

In the last question children had to fill in a blank section after the phrase ‘I learned....’. The majority of them did complete it. Some children wrote down that they learned about

telenovelas in general, the main characteristics of this genre, and about the production of TV programmes. Others wrote down they learned about how audiences are targeted, and that TV programmes and films convey cultural messages that they influence their viewers. A few gave miscellaneous answers or got confused and wrote down what they learned from watching the telenovela *Maria ee Ashimee*: Only one boy wrote down that he learned nothing. Table K summarises examples of children's answers to this question.

Table K: Examples of Answers to 'I learned.....' Phrase

'I LEARNED.....'	
About:	
telenovelas	'.....what a telenovela is'
	'.....about telenovela, about some series and other things'
	'.....that telenovelas come from foreign countries'
	'.....a series with a woman leading character and a rich man is called telenovela'
TV programmes' production	'.....series need producer, director, sound technician, actors/actresses, cameraman, and script writer';
	'.....that cartoons are made on a computer'
audience targeting	'all series and films aim at an audience'
	'.....what a telenovela is and why films and cartoons are produced'
	'.....lots of things about TV series, how they called, which audience they aim at, etc'
cultural messages in TV programmes and films	'.....every scenario teaches us something'
	'.....all films help us to learn several things for our future life'
	'.....that the series send us messages'
miscellaneous answers	'.....what an illusion is'
	'.....everything about television'
Maria ee Asximee	'.....that it taught us how to become beautiful'
	'.....that appearance doesn't matter'
	'.....that one's life can change'

At the end of the lesson, I thanked the children for their participation and asked them to tell me what they thought about them. However, only a few of them commented that they were different and the tasks were difficult. When I said that this was the last lesson we did together I had the feeling that those who found them difficult felt some relief about this.

When the bell rung some girls and boys came to see me and said they would like to do lessons together but only about drawing/painting.

CHAPTER 7

REFLECTION AND EVALUATION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reports the findings of the evaluation of the educational intervention carried out with students in Grades 5 and 6 between 22 February and 22 March 2007. I adopted the view of Nevo (1983), Eisner (1979), Cohen *et al* (1997), Forsyth *et al* (1999), Guba & Lincoln (1981) and Fitzpatrick *et al* (2004) that the purpose of evaluation is to assess the merit and/or worth of a particular educational intervention, programme or course. This implied that I needed to establish both the inherent value of the ‘Deconstructing Television Imagery’ project without considering its possible applications (merit) and whether it had some utility in practice in the Greek context (worth). It also implied a systematic examination of the events that occurred before and during the intervention and their impact on student learning. Although I tried to judge the effectiveness and efficiency of the ‘Deconstructing Television Imagery’ strategy and the intervention, I chose a formative rather than a summative evaluation approach that aims at improvement of an educational programme and leads to modification, revisions, and further development (Fitzpatrick *et al*, 2004; Worthen & Sanders, 1987). Because ‘Deconstructing Television Imagery’ was a new project for Greece I realised that any programme I developed would need to go through several revisions before it could be finalised and distributed to large numbers of teachers other than myself. So, changes to the lessons resulting from the evaluation are summarised and a revised lesson unit is presented at the end of the chapter.

Being the internal evaluator of my own intervention raised issues of objectivity and credibility. However, data triangulation and systematic reflection on planning and delivery

of the lessons counterbalanced this to some extent. Schon's (1983) ideas on reflective practice, theories of reflection in and on-action presented by Convery (1998), Fisher & Somerton (2000), Beck & Kosnic (2001), and Pereira (1999) and educational evaluation by Cohen *et al* (1997), Forsyth *et al* (1999), Fitzpatrick *et al*, (2004), and Worthen & Sanders (1987) were helpful and all provided insights into how reflect in my own knowing-in-practice and question my assumptions about learning and teaching. Reading about them contributed to the development of an evaluation plan. Reflection/evaluation was organised around twelve dimensions of curriculum specified by Cohen *et al* (1997) (LP, Appendix, 15), namely student learning objectives, content and core concepts of lessons, instructional planning, learning activities, organisation of teaching time and activities, teaching style and mode of delivery, language and terminology used during the lessons, the visual resources, materials and equipment, student motivation and feedback, student behaviour, attitudes, and achievement. However, it was necessary to summarise these dimensions of teaching first in order to analyse the main findings of the implementation. So, I re-organised and framed them into five themes as follows:

- (i) Children's preconceptions of art and visual culture education
- (ii) Telenovelas and *Barbie* animated films as art curriculum content
- (iii) Planning and delivery of lessons
- (iv) Increasing children's understanding of the telenovelas and *Barbie* films
- (v) Ability to critically analyse identity

To interpret and evaluate the data it was necessary to revisit literature about visual culture education, critical pedagogy, mass media and identity. I also reviewed books and articles about theory and practice of teaching in general and children's cognitive development. I considered it crucial to reflect on how the children and I felt and what I thought about the intervention, possible researcher bias and consider how the intervention contributed to my own development as a professional. I hoped that this would give the reader of the thesis a whole view about the intervention and provide some evidence about the tensions and complexities I dealt with as teacher-researcher.

7.2 CHILDREN'S PRECONCEPTIONS OF ART AND VISUAL CULTURE EDUCATION

In the introductory session, I asked the children to tell me what they thought the purpose of art education was. Boys and girls in both grades associated art in school with practical work and specifically with drawing and painting or making crafts. Watts (2005) explains that the importance allocated to the subject of art in primary schools and teachers' attitudes and practices strongly influences children's perceptions about it. Although it was not possible to investigate whether the children in this research were aware of their teachers' attitudes towards art, it was clear that they understood art had low status in comparison with other school subjects. This is not surprising given that art lessons in Greece are taught towards the end of the school programme typically and are about 'making' only. They tend to take the form of drawing in response to seasonal themes like 'Christmas' or 'Carnival' or lessons in other subjects such as history or language. As Labitsi (2000) and Droulia (2004) have pointed out, large numbers of generalist teachers understand the purpose of art education as self-expression of feelings and emotions or as a play or leisure time activity and neglect to teach art history, art criticism or aesthetics. As noted previously, the tendency of teachers to use the time allocated for art for supplementary teaching in other school subjects was confirmed by the children in Grade 5 who told me that they often were taught maths, history, or geography instead of art. Due to these conditions, it is likely that they perceived art as a practical subject with little or no educational relevance for their everyday lives. Holding such preconceptions probably influenced their behaviour and attitudes towards the experimental lessons.

Because I anticipated this, I tried to prepare them in advance for a different kind of art lesson. So, I explained alternative learning activities related to the goals of art criticism and art history and mentioned a wider variety of visual forms and genres that could be used as content for art lessons. The children did not question my authority to decide the lesson content and learning activities in class but at break time some of them told me that they thought these art lessons would be about drawing/painting. As Ames (1992) point out, students' perceptions of whether a classroom task or activity is appropriate for a given school subject affect their motivations to learn. These children did not openly judge the

appropriateness of the learning activities and tasks I set per se. However, their unwillingness to put effort into and become actively engaged in some of them probably reflected feelings of dissatisfaction. Some children did not participate in the classroom discussions about the social class representations portrayed in the telenovela *Anipotaktes Kardies (Rebelde Way)* perhaps because they were not interested in the topic or the lessons did not fulfil their expectations.

Although one practical activity (drawing) was included, the children were not persuaded that the experimental lessons were ‘art’. In actual fact classroom discussion about the production, characteristics, audiences, and cultural messages of telenovelas and *Barbie* animated films occupied more than half of the time allotted for each lesson. This probably explains why no child mentioned the practical activities in response to the question ‘*I learned....*’ included on the student evaluation sheet. Moreover, some children in Grade 5 and almost half of those in Grade 6 were unwilling to engage in practical tasks saying that these were ‘boring’. As Pavlou (2006) explains this is a commonplace response from children aged 11-12 who doubt their abilities in art. Research by Bornholt & Ingram (2001) and Cox (1992) has shown that students’ low confidence in drawing skills and unwillingness to engage in drawing may be a result of either discouragement of teachers or parents in the past or lack of experience with visual culture genres other than fine arts and school art and design activities. I did not try to find out if these children already held low perceptions of their competence in art because this was not a research aim. However, it is possible that they lacked confidence in art making as the classroom teacher for Grade 6 told me he faced similar apathy in his art lessons (FN, 8.3.07, Gr.6). It is also possible that this ingrained attitude affected their motivation and performance during the experimental lessons.

The lessons included writing tasks. This is consistent with European and North American art educators’ recommendations for using them in art lessons along with the creation of art to help students assimilate knowledge (Milbrandt, 1997). Suggestions include filling in phrases on a work sheet, writing a letter to an artist/maker (Vihos, 2006), accompanying explanatory comments on students’ own drawings, paintings or photographs (Briggs,

2007), producing scenarios for advertisements or TV programmes (Stokrocki, 2002; Degee & Cochrane, 1995), or writing short stories about the value of objects (Argiro, 2004). I set three writing tasks in this research: First I asked the children to create and write a summary scenario for a telenovela and describe a target audience. Second, I asked them to draw their future selves and write comments under them and third to recycle a fairytale and write down their own versions of a scenario from it for an animated film. The children in Grade 5 were especially unwilling to engage in writing activities and complained about ‘tiredness’ and ‘difficulty’ understanding instructions. This probably happened because they were unfamiliar with such tasks in art lessons. For example, Mirto (Gr.5) complained ‘this wasn’t a language lesson’. Once again, it appears that these children’s preconceptions of art determined their negative behaviour towards the intervention. So, I concluded that teachers in Greece need to introduce alternative learning activities and interpretation before visual culture is introduced to the students.

7.3 TELENOVELAS AND *BARBIE* ANIMATED FILMS AS ART CURRICULUM CONTENT

A decision was taken to base the content of the ‘Deconstructing Television Imagery’ lesson unit on primary age children’s preferences for visual images. This was consistent with the view of many art educators that a precondition for developing visual culture curricula is that the content is relevant to students’ lives (Duncum, 1997a; Boughton, 2005; Freedman, 1997b, 2003a, 2003c; Carpenter, 2003). As stated in previous chapters, the choice of the content for the lesson unit was informed by the findings of the group interviews which explains why I selected telenovelas and *Barbie* animated films. One reason for choosing the telenovela *Anipotaktes Kardies (Rebelde Way)* was that it was preferred or mentioned by the majority of children aged between 10 and 12 who participated in part one of the research. Another reason was that it was being broadcast by ET1, a Greek state TV channel, at the time the second part of the research was planned. Regarding *Barbie* animated films, although these were mentioned by girls aged 6-10, I included them mainly to exemplify ways audiences are targeted. Despite the boys’ complaints that this choice was gendered, this motivated the majority of children in both

Grades to participate in class discussion and increased their understanding of how and why these kinds of animated films target specific audiences.

Another reason for choosing *Anipotaktes Kardies* and *Barbie of Swan Lake* was that I thought this would enable children understand generic characteristics of the telenovela and animated film, makers' intentions, audience targeting and realism construction. As Alvermann & Hagood (2000) point out teachers need to consider the 'power' of cultural/media genres in relation to the educational goals they want to accomplish. *Anipotaktes Kardies*', as with every other telenovela, 'power' resides in emotional participation it allows and particularities of their narrative that revolves around melodrama, social class conflict, and promotion of social mobility, especially in ways it exploits personalisation through addressing social issues in personal or familial stories (La Pastina *et al*, 2003; Acosta-Alzuru, 2003; Pena, 2004). The fact that these children managed to identify some of the generic characteristics of telenovelas regarding the roles of main characters and plot line (RD, 1/3/07) implied that the choice of *Anipotaktes Kardies* as an exemplar was successful. Similarly, I chose *Barbie of Swan Lake* because of the learning objectives for increasing understanding of the film makers' intentions to use recycled stories from fairy-tales to target specific audiences and of ways these kinds of films contribute on girls' gender identity formation. Artz (2002) and Blair (2006) explain that the 'power' of these animated films rests on (i) their contribution to the socialisation of girls in terms of providing them with gender roles; (ii) the fact that they are a source of fantasy, pleasure, and escape; and (iii) the ability of Mattel Inc to enhance or modify the storylines of well-known fairy-tales with more realistic, entertaining narratives. Classroom discussion (RD, 15 & 22/3/07) confirmed that *Barbie* animated films are effective curriculum content for visual culture in the way they offer teachers and children opportunities to explore gender identity construction.

Once I began to teach about *Anipotaktes Kardies* I realised that a considerable number of children in Greece were fans. The children's enthusiastic participation in the lessons and contributions to class discussion validated the choice. However, some of them did not like it at all, preferred other TV series, had never watched it, or no longer watched it. This

constituted a problem as they raised objections, were less motivated and clearly disappointed by the chosen topic. Although I explained why I had chosen this TV series over others, they remained unhappy. Duncum (1999) explains that everyday visual experiences chosen as exemplars for study should be up-to-date. It is possible that *Anipotaktes Kardies* was an out-of-date exemplar as some of the children's preferences changed after group interviews were conducted. On the other hand, it was apparent during these interviews that the children preferences for TV programmes varied. Had I re-assessed Grade 5 and 6 children's preferences for TV programmes before I began the unit, I would have opted for a majority choice. This in turn might have caused disappointment to some of them. Despite this weakness, which will probably always constitute a problem with visual culture content, the fact that the lessons were about familiar TV programmes and films gave opportunities to everyone to contribute to class discussion.

The majority of boys and girls participating in the research were familiar with both genres and aware of the main plot lines of *Anipotaktes Kardies (Rebelde Way)* and *Barbie of Swan Lake*. As Alexander & Cousens (2004) point out, familiarity with soap operas, telenovelas, TV dramas, or films does not mean that children think about them critically, or search out cultural messages when watching them. Indeed, these boys and girls' first comments about plot lines and main characters were merely descriptive and simplistic. For example, Mary and Miltos (Gr.5) said 'it (*Anipotaktes Kardies*) shows how they (the teenagers in the college) live' and 'what they do, and how they spend their time'. Parker (2001) has observed that a child's 'reading' of TV programmes or films usually takes the form of a generalistic retelling of 'what is happening' in them. Because my aim was to get the children to deconstruct telenovelas and *Barbie* films it was necessary to find ways of getting them to focus on and discuss specific aspects of extracts from them, e.g. conventions in genres, construction of reality, drawing on their previous experiences and knowledge, rather than merely watch them and retell their plot line.

In practice attempting to deconstruct *Anipotaktes Kardies* and *Barbie of Swan Lake* with children aged 10-12 was complex and difficult. The children in this research appeared to distance themselves from watching *Anipotaktes Kardies* and especially *Barbie* films,

although they knew everything about the plot lines and characters. I was surprised that very few girls in Grade 6 admitted they had watched *Barbie* films in the past. Perhaps this is because pre-teens aged 11-12 want to mark themselves out as different from younger children. It was noticeable that when they described *Barbie* films' audience they talked about 'young girls' and said things like 'only young girls watch this film'.

Another problem noted by scholars in media and visual culture education is that children sometimes resist teachers' attempts to have them talk and share their thoughts about visual media images they encounter in everyday life (Buckingham & Sefton-Green, 1994; Alvermann & Hagood, 2000; Duncum, 1997a). During these research lessons, some children were reluctant to name *Anipotaktes Kardies* characters they probably desired to emulate and explain why. For example, Mirto (Gr.5) did not want to be like any of them because she did not 'want to change her personality'. Similarly, Tasos (Gr.6) did not want to be like these characters because he 'did not like their personality', Nadia (Gr.6) said she was happy the way she was, and Akis (Gr.6) laughed when he told us that all *Anipotaktes Kardies* characters were 'more or less crack-brained'. As Duncum (ibid) points out, lessons can turn into parody when children try to mock teachers and the media genres under discussion. In this instance, these Grade 6 children found a playful way to resist my instructions to draw their future selves. Some of them drew comic heroes like Naruto, while others started commenting on and making jokes about their own and each other drawings. It is possible that they understood questions about how they envisioned their future selves as an intrusion of their privacy. This may explain why Alvermann & Hagood (2000) emphasise the importance of establishing a good rapport with learners.

During the lessons I concentrated on teaching the visual elements of the selected film and TV programme. However, the sound, music or wording plays an important role also in meaning. The narrative of a TV programme in particular is based upon verbal language. As Duncum (2004) points out, whereas the visual mode of representation and communication is independent in the case of TV images it cannot be separated from language and sound. Strictly speaking, I should have asked the children to examine musical effects, how the sound sometimes mirrors the image, or how close-up screens are used to emphasise

dialogues. This might have enabled them to better understand how audiences get emotionally involved with characters or how the messages in films and TV programmes are emphasised by using sound effects or music. On reflection, I should have engaged children in examination of the interaction between these communicative modes as it might have enhanced their understanding of how these genres are constructed.

7.4 PLANNING AND DELIVERY OF LESSONS

Schon (1983) describes the reflective practitioner as a ‘thoughtful, wise and contemplative’ person whose work involves ‘intuition, insight and artistry’. In this research, intuition was understood to arise from the teacher-researcher’s emotional response to the intervention as a whole. As in the case with any teacher my response to the events as they unfolded affected the way I acted in particular classroom situations. Therefore, this section of the chapter begins by communicating some of the personal feelings about the intervention recorded in my diary (Appendix, 22). This section is followed by reflection on and evaluation of the planning and delivery of the intervention and consideration of the implications of this for student learning. Although teaching and learning are interrelated, I tried to distinguish them in this part of the research so as to enable me decide what kinds of modifications were needed to the ‘Deconstructing Television Imagery’ lesson unit. As Yildirim (2003) and Bullard (1998) point out, the nature of teaching requires planning before and during an implementation. For this reason, I decided not to analyse and report on planning and implementation of the intervention separately but try to evaluate its various components (aims, concepts, activities, resources, etc) together in order to identify weaknesses and/or strengths.

7.4.1 Personal Feelings

Although I felt it was a correct decision to change the research design from a teacher survey to an educational intervention, when the time came to go to schools I was concerned that I was out of touch with the reality of Greek primary education because I had worked and studied in London for the previous five years. I knew there had been changes in the student population due to immigration (Petronoti & Trainatfyllidou, 2003; Nikolaou, 2000). I was informed, by articles in educational journals and newspapers

regarding Greek teachers' concerns, about the new national curriculum (Grollios, 2004; Noutsos, 2004; Therianos, 2003a) but reading about such developments is different from dealing with them as a teacher in real life.

I was concerned also about teaching children I had never met before. There might have been advantages in getting the classroom teachers to deliver the lessons. However, they were unwilling to do this. The factual information they and the headteacher provided proved useful as it gave me some insights into student population in both Grades. Unfortunately, their comments about Grade 6's misbehaviour and Grade 5's low attainment scores prior to the intervention lessened my expectations. Dean (2001) and Matsagouras (1998) suggest that it is crucial for teachers to assess student's general abilities, performance, possible discrepancies between abilities and attainment, previous knowledge, interests and needs just so as to teach them effectively. They can be effected through formal written and oral tests, observing behaviour inside the classroom or talking to students during lessons and at break-times. However, due to the time limitations, I could not formally assess these children's abilities in speculating, reasoning, reflecting and critical thinking, or access their interests and needs in advance. So, I had to rely only on the classroom observations during the induction session and at break times.

Unlike a normal teaching situation, I had to find ways to build trust and rapport with children quickly. The strategies I developed for this were the following: I introduced myself and explained what I was doing at the start and then I asked the children to briefly introduce themselves to me. I quickly involved them in class discussion about what they did in art lessons and informed them about the main findings of the group interviews. Then I introduced the subject matter of the lesson unit and tried to clarify its aims. Throughout the sessions I always tried to arrive at class early and chatted with children already there. Although they appeared to feel comfortable, the rapport was not as strong as it would have been if we had more time to establish patterns of communication and interaction. Because I was a stranger in another teacher's class, I did not use jokes with them in attempt to cheer them up as I usually do. This was a weakness because, in my experience, humour usually increases enjoyment of lessons. On reflection and as a result of these concerns and worries,

I did not enjoy teaching the lessons and was rather serious and tense which, I suspect, the majority of children sensed. It is possible the lessons were not inspiring or enterprising because my delivery was not sufficiently enthusiastic. Despite all this, my previous experience of teaching enabled me to engage the children in discussion and practical activities and I was able to offer opportunities for them to broaden their perspectives of art education.

7.4.2 Reflection on Aims and Objectives

As Cohen *et al* (1997) and Stake (1970) note, educational aims are the starting point for evaluating curriculum intervention in that they identify its anticipated outcomes with regard to student achievement. ‘Deconstructing Television Imagery’ was designed to engage children in processes of description, analysis and speculation, and help them learn that:

- (i) makers of television programmes always intend viewers to read them in certain ways;
- (ii) visual images from television carry cultural messages that may influence viewers’ responses and values;
- (iii) visual images from TV programmes and mass media stimulate viewers’ desires and future dreams, and help them construct their self-images (LP, Appendix 15).

I adopted four criteria from general education literature to help me evaluate the learning objectives for the unit as a whole and each session, namely the criterion of clarity, completeness, appropriateness, and feasibility (Cohen *et al*, 1997; Hopkins, 2002; McDonald, 2002; Linn & Gronlund, 2000). The children seemed to understand the three objectives and did not ask for further explanations when they were first announced in class. It seems likely, therefore, that they were clear and concise. On reflection, I think that the fact that the children were informed of what they were expected to learn beforehand positively affected their performance. This is something I usually do when I teach but since this was not my own class I do not know if these children had experienced this before. As Pollard (2002) and McDonald (2002) point out, communicating and sharing learning objectives enhances the focus on lesson content and helps students gain a clear

understanding of what they are about to learn. Indeed, the majority of children in both Grades were able to recap the main points of the lessons to me when I asked, especially after the second lesson. However, I did not explain thoroughly enough why the learning objectives were important or relevant to real life. Though I have no evidence to back up this claim, it is possible these children did not appreciate the relevance of the lesson content to life-world conditions.

Linn & Gronlund (2000), argue that learning objectives are ‘complete’ if they promote high-order thinking skills. The skills they were intended to develop were ‘observation’, ‘recall’, ‘interpretation’, ‘seeing patterns’, ‘generalisation’, ‘speculation’, ‘grasping meaning’, ‘recognition of hidden or implied meanings’, and ‘making reasoned arguments’. The children observed the extract of the telenovela and animated film in order to identify ways social classes were represented; they recalled previous experiences of watching telenovelas in order to identify ‘patterns’ i.e. similarities and differences between them; they interpreted television imagery and identified or speculated makers’ intentions and cultural messages in *Barbie* animated film (‘recognition of hidden or implied meanings’); they saw patterns in different telenovelas, discussed its generic characteristics and arrived at a definition of this genre (generalisation); they hypothesised different plot lines for *Anipotaktes Kardies* and they tried to make reasoned arguments about how and why audiences are targeted as well as ways messages and gender stereotypes in telenovelas and *Barbie* films influence viewers.

Regarding ‘appropriateness’, McDonald (2002) and Linn & Gronlund (2000) argue that this should be determined in accord with the goals of a particular school and/or national curriculum and be consistent with the purpose of the intervention. The student learning objectives for this intervention were congruent with the aims and objectives of the Greek national curriculum for art published in 2003 (CCTF/ISC, 2003) for Grades 5 and 6 and specifically with the objectives for ‘discussing artists’ intentions’ (p.123); ‘narrating a story through a series of images’ (p.135); ‘using art education vocabulary’ (p.135); ‘participating in discussions about artworks and artefacts’ (p.135); and ‘learning about professions like those of photographer’s, designer’s, etc’ (p.135). Regarding feasibility, I

concluded they were reasonably ‘realistic’ in terms of levels of students’ ability. Their responses on the evaluation sheet (see Chapter 6, pp. 222-227) were evidence that they did understand how realism is constructed in telenovela *Maria ee Ashimee* (*Maria the Ugly*) and were able to identify some of the cultural messages it communicates. However, they found it difficult to discuss the concept of identity formation in class. So, I concluded this aim was not fully achieved and more time and planning was required to help them comprehend it.

7.4.3 Lesson Organisation: Activities, Timing, Materials and Equipment

The three learning activities of classroom discussion, writing, and drawing were chosen to effect the learning objectives (Labadie, 1991; Dean, 2001). Following Freedman (2003) and Bruner’s (1977) advice, the learning was organised in a spiral way. Core ideas or concepts, like ‘audience targeting’, ‘maker/producer’s intentions’, ‘realism and myth construction’ and ‘gender representations’ were revisited several times in class and new knowledge about them was added to what children had already learned. For example, in the third session the discussion of how makers/producers and companies target audiences was revisited to help the children recall what they had already learned in the first session and extend their understanding about how, for example, they promote and secure sales of *Barbie* dolls by creating related other forms of merchandise like animated films, console games, magazines, and toys.

Classroom discussion was the main activity used to facilitate identification of the characteristics of the telenovela and *Barbie* film, inquire into the maker/producer’s intentions, and interpret their cultural messages. Critical discussion and analysis of images have featured strongly in recent developments in curriculum theory and practice, such as Discipline-based Art Education (DBAE), the social reconstructionist movement, critical pedagogy, and visual culture education (Mims, 1995; Barret, 2002; Freedman & Schuler, 2002). Although Barret (2000; 2002) describes critical inquiry and analysis as both a personal and shared or communal enterprise, in this research classroom discussion was almost exclusively dependent on individual contributions. A few children dominated class discussion and others did not talk enough. For example, in Grade 6, Tasos and Akis

dominated the discussion about the telenovelas' generic characteristics, production and audiences. As Hollander (2002) points out uneven participation is a common drawback in classroom discussion because some students' fear public speaking, or being graded on this kind of participation. As referred to the literature on general education, both interactions between children and a collective effort to seek answers are central in successful class discussion (Matsagouras, 1998; Hollander, 2002). The classroom environment for this research and especially the seating arrangements of tables in rows was not conducive to full participation and probably decreased peer interaction. On reflection, rearranging the seating in a semi-circle or circle would have increased opportunities for eye-contact between children and enhanced the class discussion.

As noted previously, the practical art activities and written work were designed to effect the three objectives of improving children's understanding of how makers/producers target audiences, ways in which the genres selected for study represented or reproduced cultural values and how they influenced peoples' choices, desires, and dreams. As Gude (2007) and Freedman (1997a; 2003a) point out, art making offers students opportunities to visualise and explore ideas or models embedded in visual imagery. It also facilitates reflection on ways they articulate messages conveyed by visual culture. In this instance, the children were asked to draw their future selves in the hope this would expand self-awareness of how they were influenced by visual images in the mass media. The majority produced drawings showing how they imagined themselves and were influenced mainly by TV programmes like telenovela *Floricienta*, comedy *50-50*, social drama *Tees Agapees Maheria*, and anime *Naruto* and *Dragonball*.

Drawings of Future Selves

Figure 45: Maria, Gr.5, *Sto Para Pente*, pencil and markers **Figure 46: Dimis, Gr.6, *Dragonball*, pencil**

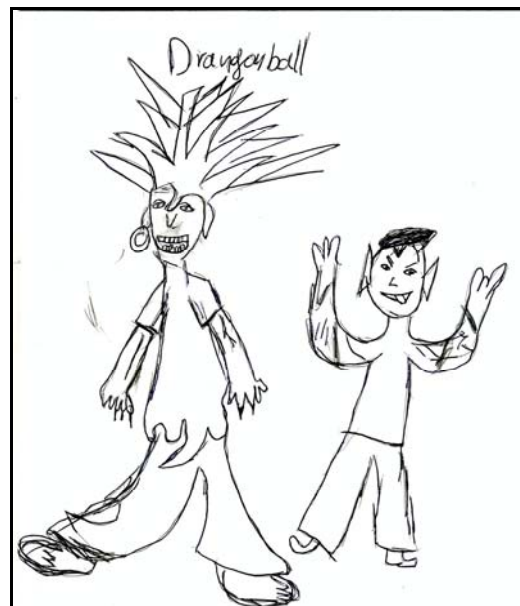
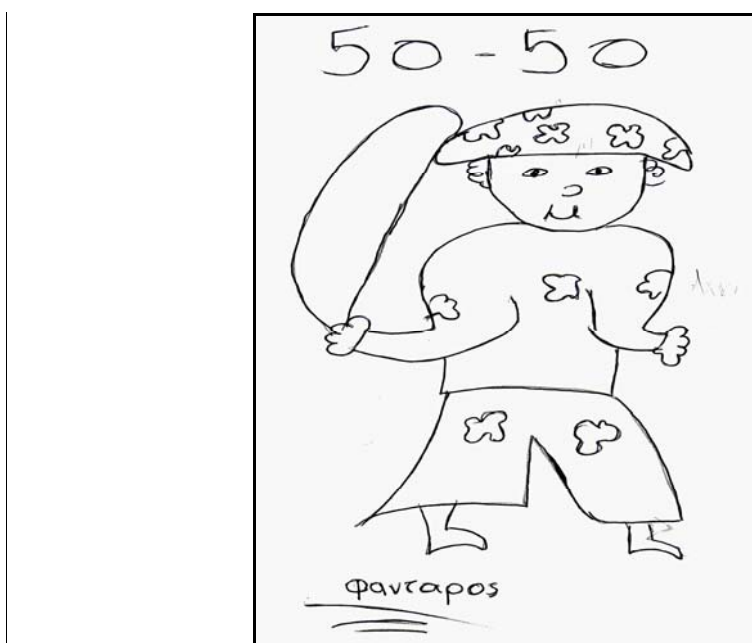


Figure 47: Timos, Gr.5, *A Soldier*, pencil



However, it was not possible to discuss them in class or reconstruct and reflect on the visual experiences they articulated due to poor time planning. Organising sessions over two continuous teaching periods lasting 90 minutes would have alleviated this problem and

provided sufficient time for more in-depth exploration of ideas raised through practical activities and assessment of student artwork. It might also have encouraged experimentation with more appropriate art media and techniques for visual culture education like digital photography, computer-aided art, and web-based research.

As mentioned previously some children were unwilling to engage in writing and/or drawing. Together with a lack of confidence in drawing and their preconceptions about art education, another explanation could be problems I experienced explaining their purpose. As Dean (2001) and Matsagouras (1998) note, it is important the students know the purpose of a practical task, sequences of tasks and how they are related in order to find personal meaning and value in lesson. Some of these children clearly found it difficult to understand the task of recycling fairytales in comic strip form. I concluded there were three possible reasons for this: (i) my instructions lacked clarity because I asked for two different things at the same time; (ii) my explanations of their relevance to the topics, like how makers/producers recycle well-known fairy tales to attract certain kinds of audiences, were not full enough and lacked clarity; and/or (iii) a failure to explain how they relate to real life. On reflection, I should have listed the activities and tasks on the chalkboard and gone over each one as I did with the learning objectives. Also, I should have separated this particular task into two parts. Finally, I should have planned alternative practical activities that were not art relevant like role-play, or small group work. This might have given me opportunities to further explore the abovementioned topics before I introduced the art activity.

Scholars of art and visual culture education argue that delivering it through interdisciplinary activities makes art lessons more meaningful for students (Stokrocki, 2005; Freedman, 2003c, Efland *et al*, 1996; Ulbricht, 1998; Walker, 2001). However, it was not possible to integrate the ‘Deconstructing Television Imagery’ lesson unit with other school subjects because I only taught five lessons and was a newcomer to the school. In a large-scale intervention, I would probably connect the study of telenovelas in art to language lessons to help children better understand their narrative conventions. A link would be also possible with mathematics since these children mentioned percentages of

viewing ratings. Although I did not deliberately plan to integrate the intervention with social studies through practical art activities or classroom discussion, on reflection it is clearly the case there was a bond with this school subject because I asked the children to discuss values, gender and social class stereotypes. As Duncum (2005b) and Ulbricht (1998) point out, teaching about popular visual culture genres like soap operas, films, telenovelas, or music video-clips is inherently interdisciplinary, because they integrate students lived experiences at school and home. In this sense, 'Deconstructing Television Imagery' lessons were interdisciplinary by design because the children were expected to recall and reflect on their own visual experiences and knowledge acquired outside as well as inside school.

Due to the short length of the lesson unit, there was not enough time to introduce the children to new art materials. They were familiar with watercolours, crayons, pencil colours, markers, and drawing paper for 2-dimensional work, which are relatively cheap and easy to manage. I considered them appropriate for the practical activities planned. Their familiarity was an advantage as I did not have to plan any additional technical instructions for their use. Time limitation was the main reason for excluding printmaking or computer-aided work that is more closely related to visual culture education. Although I planned to show children extracts from the *Anipotaktes Kardies (Rebelde Way)* and *Barbie of Swan Lake* neither a DVD player nor a computer were available in either classrooms. Moreover, lack of an overhead projector made presentation of the extracts extremely difficult and the children had to crowd around me to watch them on my personal laptop screen. Some of them could not view the screen properly and missed parts of extracts. Disruption occurred when they moved around to come closer to the laptop screen. On reflection, I should have searched possibilities for renting or borrowing an overhead projector. In conclusion, the lack of art materials and equipment, which is a common problem in Greek schools (Labitsi, 2000; Christopoulou, 2004), was a serious obstacle that could hinder the introduction of visual culture lessons into art lessons in Greece.

7.5 INCREASING CHILDREN’S UNDERSTANDING OF TELENOVELAS AND *BARBIE* FILMS

This section of the chapter reports on the findings of the evaluation of what the children learned from participating in the ‘Deconstructing Television Imagery’ lessons and how they extended previous knowledge gained outside school.

7.5.1 Production, Genre Characteristics and Audiences

One of the intended learning outcomes of the unit was to enable children discuss and understand the process of construction/production of telenovelas and *Barbie* animated films and the crew involved in this. Children in both Grades already knew the job descriptions of the telenovela and animated film crew, their roles, and some stages in the production process. They were able to explain what a director, producer, scriptwriter, camera operator, lighting and sound technicians do and how actors/actresses are selected.

At the beginning the scriptwriter writes the scenario, and then he goes to the director and asks him if they will film it. When they agree, they search for a producer to buy the cameras and scenery, they hire actors/actresses, and then they do it (Akis, Gr.5).

Although media education is not a taught subject in Greek primary schools, some children were familiar with media terminology and knew terms like ‘film director’, ‘scriptwriter’, ‘animator’ and ‘animation’ and ‘3D graphics’. It is probable they learned them and about the work of production crews from credits at the ends or beginnings of TV programmes and/or reading TV guides. This is consistent with Moeller’s (1996) observation that television provides audiences with this kind of factual information. As Goodman (2003) suggested, children learn TV language from infancy and by the age of eight have developed an understanding of and use some media terms. However, there were some misconceptions about the roles of director, writer and producer and a few pupils misunderstood the producer’s role mostly confusing it with that of financial manager. For example, Kate (Gr.6) said that the ‘scriptwriter chooses a time to broadcast when there is no other (TV programme) like it’.

The majority of Grade 6 children understood that the production of TV programmes is a way for persons involved in the television industry to ‘make money’.

- Takis (Gr.6): They (the channels) do them (the TV programmes) to make money.
- Akis (Gr.6): Advertisements bring money to them.

It is possible that they appropriated relevant information from magazines, newspapers, or TV gossip shows about the money TV channels in Greece spend making TV series, and salaries paid to famous News broadcasters and TV personas. Ang (1990, p.18), for example, argues that people can obtain knowledge about the large amounts of money TV industry spends on targeting audiences through TV broadcasting paraphernalia such TV guides, advertisements, interviews with TV personalities and previews of forthcoming programmes. Although the children in both Grades understood that TV industry spends money to make TV programmes, they appeared to experience difficulty comprehending how they get revenue from advertising. For example, one boy thought that people paid money to watch TV programmes but could not explain how. 'We pay for all these TV programmes but I don't know how' (Kostas, Gr.6).

Surprisingly, only one child mentioned commercial TV but could not explain the role of advertising breaks in the 'money making' process. One problem was that I did not ask them to discuss why commercials interrupt telenovelas. It is probable they found it difficult to associate sponsorship of TV programmes with commercial broadcasting and advertising revenues because of their limited knowledge about such issues. However, some children in Gr.6 were aware of TV programme ratings and said things like: 'Young girls watch these kinds of films only (*Barbie* films) and thus the channel increases its viewing rates' (Chara, Gr.6). Debate about daily audience measurements and viewing ratings in the Greek mass media may have informed these responses. The children did not really understand the concept of audience measurement, though some of them knew that a Greek company called AGB Hellas is responsible for this. However, they were certain it had to do with money. 'The producer chooses a time when there isn't another TV series for children like this one in order to increase viewing ratings and earn money' (Stathis, Gr.6). Their limited understanding of how the size and composition of an audience relates to promotion, scheduling, and publicity of a certain TV programme reflects the lack of media education in Greek primary school.

At the beginning of the research I had assumed that children would be able to identify generic characteristics of TV genres from experience even though they did not know their names. This expectation was fuelled by Alexander and Cousens (2004), Buckingham (1993), and Mittel's (2001) argument that children can identify the characteristics that determine their preferences, and viewing practices. Asking them to find similarities in telenovelas that have been broadcasted by Greek state and private TV channels enabled these children to correctly identify two of their recurring themes (love, romance and social class struggle) and two archetypal characters (the good young woman, the rich man).

Chara (Gr.6):	They all are about love.
Takis (Gr.6):	The poor woman falls in love with the rich guy.
Menios (Gr.5):	They are all from Argentina.
Lena (Gr.5):	Women have the leading roles.

They managed to identify the typical settings and locations such as places of work, a village, or part of town. They also identified similar narrative elements such as dramatic, comic or sentimental structure and dramatic endings of episodes and said things like: 'they have suspense and sorrow' (Yiota, Gr.5); 'at the end they always get married and live happily' (Tasos, Gr.6). Some children were also able to compare *Anipotaktes Kardies* with other telenovelas and identify variations in their themes and characters. For, example they mentioned that the main characters of *Anipotaktes Kardies* are teenagers in contrast to *Corina the Wild Cat* and *Floricienta* in which the typical character is a poor but good young woman. They efficiently identified generic characteristics of *Barbie* animated films. For example, they mentioned that *Barbie* doll is the leading character and that the plot line is based on well-known fairytales and stories like *Rapunzel* and *The Twelve Princesses*.

Marina (Gr.6):	The leading character is always <i>Barbie</i> .
Timos (Gr.5):	Their stories have magic. They are like fairytales.

They used their experience and prior knowledge gained from watching telenovelas and *Barbie* films to actively define the concept of 'telenovela' and '*Barbie* animated films'. This is consistent with constructivist educational theory, which asserts that the basis of learning is found in students' direct life experiences and past knowledge (Bruner, 1977; Brown *et al*, 1989; Davis *et al*, 2000). This theory may explain why these children readily understood that TV genres are not governed by fixed rules and that each telenovela

presents a variation on a given theme and standard characters and could explain this with reference to audience targeting and retaining.

It was not necessary to define the term ‘audience’ as all the children appeared to understand it. They talked about and perceived ‘audiences’ as large ‘groups of people who watch TV programmes’ or film. They were able to identify audiences for both genres and relate this to plot line, characters and broadcasting time. For example, they presumed that the audience for *Anipotaktes Kardies (Rebelde Way)* is ‘young people’ and ‘children aged ten to sixteen’ because their main characters of this telenovela are teenagers. This is consistent with Ross & Nightingale’s (2003) idea that discussing about television programmes students can understand who their audiences and what their viewing practices are. The children commented that adolescents and young people watched *Anipotaktes Kardies* because they ‘find commonalities with the characters’ and it helps them relate to social situations. As Davis & Dickinson (2004) point out, sex and sexuality, family tensions, and peer relationships are recurrent topics within teen entertainment programmes. The children in this research also were aware that TV programmes aimed at teenagers and children are made to both entertain them and prepare them to cope with real life problems. Yiota and Stelios (Gr.5), for example, mentioned that children watch *Anipotaktes Kardies* so ‘they can learn how they can face the same problems in the future’. This confirms Davis & Dickinson (2004) and Roberts’ (1993) observation that a prime purpose of TV programmes for teenagers is to educate and inform while entertaining and that they try to present views about drugs, sex or violence without preaching at or alienating them.

Some children in this research referred to both the makers/producers’ intentions and TV channel scheduling to explain how and why certain audiences are targeted but could not distinguish between them. For example, they mentioned that the scriptwriter of *Anipotaktes Kardies* wrote a scenario intended to ‘entertain children when they come back tired from school’. Nantia (Gr.6) said: ‘He (the scriptwriter) thought that the children would be tired coming from school and this programme (*Anipotaktes Kardies*) would attract them, so that viewing ratings will be increased’. Friedmann (2006) argues that it is not easy to distinguish the role of scriptwriters from producers in the TV industry as both of them set

out to make programmes to attract certain audiences and this may explain why the children found it difficult to distinguish their intentions. Scheduling *Anipotaktes Kardies* at noon zone suggested to them that the TV channel took students' school hours and housewives' free time into consideration so as to increase viewing rates. Lakis (Gr.5), for example, said that *Anipotaktes Kardies* is watched by 'housewives and grandmothers who have nothing to do at that time'. As Ellis (2000), Alexander & Cousens (2004), and Hill (2002) point out TV schedulers analyse viewers' everyday lives (school and working hours, lunch time, bedtimes for children), seasonal events and special occasions (Christmas, Olympic games) and the viewing ratings of similar programmes in order to find the best slot for a new one. The children in this research were not aware of all these factors. However, a few appeared to link the scheduling of *Anipotaktes Kardies* to students' everyday life patterns because they were considering their own viewing habits.

7.5.2 Children's Perceptions of Reality in Telenovelas and *Barbie* Films

Understanding how telenovelas and *Barbie* animated films construct 'realism' and 'myth' was one learning objective. Children in both Grades were able to point out and distinguish elements of reality and myth in both genres. They mentioned reality elements in settings like schools and cafés, the built and natural environment, and human relationships, and emotions. 'The fact that boys irritate girls is real' (Anne, Gr.6); 'The natural environment, the school, the buildings; there are buildings in real life' (Andreas, Gr.5). As Chandler (1995) advocates, the knowledge people gain from everyday life including TV watching enables them to establish criteria for making judgements about what is 'real' or not in a television programme. These children also recognised a class struggle, the theme of people striving for success, a love story, and tensions between friends and families in *Anipotaktes Kardies* as reality elements. It is probable that because the sequence of events, characters and settings in telenovela narratives resemble real life are 'immediately recognisable as being of today' (Slade, 2005; Pearson, 2005, p.402).

These children compared situations, settings, and characters in *Anipotaktes Kardies* (*Rebelde Way*) and *Barbie of Swan Lake* with real life in order to establish what was 'real' or not. For example, they compared the behaviour of the central characters in *Anipotaktes*

Kardies with their own at school and found similarities in that they both misbehaved with teachers on occasion and were punished for it. ‘The foolish things those children do are like these we do at school’ (Kostas, Gr.6). As Fiske & Hartley (1988), Pearson (2005), Wright *et al* (1994), and Fiske (1987) point out TV programmes deliberately present views of the world that correspond with audience perceptions of them and are in line with their expectations and beliefs. It may be the case that these children searched for similarities between their own attitudes, behaviour and perceptions of the world and particular TV programmes in order to make judgements about what is real or close to real life. So, they had already developed and were using specific criteria to assess the reality status of *Anipotaktes Kardies* and *Barbie of Swan Lake*. With reference to Chandler (1995), the criteria were: *physical actuality* (the idea that an event or person shown on a TV programme does exist in real world); *possibility* (the idea that an uncommon phenomenon is still possible in real life); and *probability* (the idea that a similar phenomenon is likely to happen in real world). The children suggested that: love stories presented in telenovelas and *Barbie* animated films can happen in the real world; students sometimes ‘fight each other’ as they do in *Anipotaktes Kardies*; that despite differences in class and economical status is possible for two persons to have a love affair as happens in this telenovela; and that people who love or hate poor guys and students exist in the real world too.

The animated film *Barbie of Swan Lake* seemed ‘unrealistic’ to children in Grade 5 and 6. Although they recognised it contained realistic elements, like the natural environment of a forest, people’s occupations, and human relationships, the appearance of the ‘wizard’ and ‘unicorn’ were probably the main components causing them to classify this film as ‘fiction/myth’. This is consistent with Davies (1997b), Wright *et al* (1994) and Fiske’s (1987) view that the way people perceive reality or fiction is developed, though not exclusively, by viewing different types of TV programmes, films or characters. The features that constitute realism in television programmes and films were not discussed extensively during the lessons. However, the children seemed to recognise the existence of what O’Sullivan *et al* (1998) and Alexander & Cousens (2004) call *surface* and *emotional realism*. The former refers to the use of appropriate costumes, locations, interior sets, and domestic appliances to represent a certain historical period and/or culture. The children

understood that *Anipotaktes Kardies* is a contemporary telenovela because the characters wore up-to-date clothes. They said that ‘if the characters wore old clothes’ their ‘parents would have watched it years ago’. *Emotional realism* refers to representations of emotions, feelings and acts that stimulate audiences’ emotional arousal and engagement with characters (Alexander & Cousens, 2004; La Pastina *et al*, 2003; Pearson, 2005). Despite the unrealistic plot line and characters, the children appeared to understand that audiences for *Barbie* films and telenovelas can share emotions, like anxiety and happiness, with the characters. For example, Dina (Gr.6) pointed out that when ‘*Barbie* escapes danger, young girls are happy’.

In answer to my question why did the makers of telenovela and *Barbie* animated films include reality elements in them, the children said this was because they wanted to make them more ‘attractive’ and ‘interesting’. ‘I think that it is more interesting when we watch something that is, for example, from everyday life, from our lives’ (Nantia, Gr.6). They probably understood realistic representation in films and TV programmes as an important motivational factor for watching them. This confirms Fiske & Hartley’s (1988, p.160) claim that ‘the more realistic a TV programme is thought to be the more trusted and enjoyable’. These children acknowledged that *Anipotaktes Kardies* gave them a sense of a teenager’s world: school life, love affairs, entertainment, hobbies, and relationships with peer, friends, teachers and parents. ‘They (the makers) show us how school life is, how classes in high school are’ (Chara, Gr.6). However, they did not analyse or pass judgement on how close to Greek teenagers’ ordinary everyday life these representations actually were.

In discussion of ‘fiction/myth’, it was not possible to deduce whether the children understood that telenovelas are artificial constructs. Although they understood that one of their main functions is to entertain, there was no evidence in the class discussion that they understood telenovela ‘reality’ as a representation of events that did not happen in real life. The ‘relation between fictional and real worlds is complicated’ (Pearson, 2005, p. 404) and they comprehended how and why fiction was constructed in *Barbie of Swan Lake* better than in *Anipotaktes Kardies*. Since the genre was a ‘fairytale’ fiction was acceptable and

watching and being entertained by unreal beasts like unicorns, animals that speak, wizards, and princes who marry poor girls was in line with their expectations. Stelios (Gr.5) explained that ‘fairytale and magic is something fantastic and children watch it because these things do not exist and so they get amazed’. The children also appeared to understand that the makers’ intention was to tell an entertaining story in this case and not to represent reality. But only a few children in Grade 6 understood that *Mattel Inc* produced and released *Barbie* animated films for the purposes of increasing *Barbie* doll sales. For example, Akis (Gr.6) said: ‘With these fairy-tales (*Barbie of Swan Lake*) the young children can dream and play and if they liked the film then they buy the toy’.

7.5.3 Sociocultural Messages, Class and Gender Representations

One of the learning objectives of the second part of the research was to determine the extent to which children can understand that TV programmes and films are didactic and communicate socio-cultural messages and try to increase this understanding through ‘Deconstructing Television Imagery’ strategy. I asked the children whether they could identify any of the social messages telenovela *Anipotaktes Kardies* and *Barbie of Swan Lake* film convey. I also asked them to select from a multiple-choice question and write down in an open-ended one the messages embodied in the telenovela *Maria ee Ashimee* (*Maria the Ugly*) when they completed the evaluation sheet. In both cases their responses indicated that they understood that TV programmes and films carry one or more social messages but could only identify those that related to patterns of behaviour and morals. Lena (Gr.5), for example, mentioned that the main message in *Anipotaktes Kardies* was that pupils ‘should not do the nasty things they (telenovela characters) do to their teachers’. Similarly, Nikos (Gr.5) wrote on his evaluation sheet that ‘we should not despise ugly people’, and Anne (Gr.6) wrote that ‘we should respect ourselves and others’.

The children mentioned that the main messages communicated by these telenovelas and the *Barbie* animated film were directives ‘to be polite with your parents’, ‘good people earn good job positions’. They also mentioned that: ‘adolescents should go to university, learn things and stop being bored’ (Lakis, Gr.5); ‘rich and poor have the same rights and the same obligations’ (Harry, Gr.6). The children appeared to focus on the literal meanings

of the messages in *Anipotaktes Kardies* and *Barbie of Swan Lake* probably because they could describe them easily and refer to the narratives to justify their opinions. As Gamson *et al* (1992) point out children and adults have difficulty tracking down the messages TV programmes convey because they have multiple layers of meaning. This is probably exacerbated by the fact that the rapid succession and fast alternation of TV images does not allow time for reflection on what is being watched (Anderson *et al*, 2001b). It may also be the case that these children found it difficult to go beyond the obvious meanings because they did not possess enough knowledge about moral judgements, or media conventions (Livingstone, 1992).

Although I invited them to think beyond the obvious, they appeared to have difficulty doing so and redirected the discussion to the same topics: being capable, loving, polite and obedient; happiness and equity. It was apparent that they needed more time and help to trace and discuss hidden messages such as having a comfortable life, family security and social recognition. Roberts (1993) and Livingstone (1992) suggest that the ability to trace, respond to, and understand certain media messages depends not only on children's cognitive development, abilities, social knowledge and experience but also on their individual needs and perspectives. The fact that the majority of these children concentrated on behavioural norms and values may indicate that they were trying to develop a moral reasoning corresponding to the society to which they belonged. This interpretation of the data is confirmed by Buckingham (2004, 1993) and Rosenkoetter's research (2001) in that children use the cultural and social messages in TV dramas and soap operas as a resource for moral reasoning in order to find out how to relate to other people. Alasuutari (1994) also suggests that identifying the 'moral' of a TV programme enables adults and children to make sense of its plot line and narrative conventions.

What children told me or wrote down about the messages in *Anipotaktes Kardies*, *Maria ee Ashimee* and *Barbie of Swan Lake* need to be considered in the light of the school context. Buckingham's (1993) research showed that children often adjust their responses to television to fit adult concerns about influences and the quality of the programmes they watch. Also Lusk and Weinberg's (1994) research showed that students are reluctant to

discuss controversial topics like sexuality or racism in class because they expect to receive low grades if they do so. This may explain why these children did not mention sexual messages carried by the telenovelas and concentrated on positive moral judgements. Classroom discussion about *Anipotaktes Kardies* also revealed that some children did not approve of all the actions of characters they liked. For instance, Maria (Gr.5) explained that although she liked *Mia* and wanted to be like her, she did not like it that she 'was too snooty' and did not study in lessons. It was also interesting that children addressed the issue of 'beauty' in a moralistic manner. They wrote on the evaluation sheet: 'we should not give in even when we are ugly'; 'beauty does not count, only cleverness and feelings do', 'appearance is not important for being happy'. This probably happened because they related it to moral codes of right and wrong they had learned at school, home or from TV watching (Rosenkoetter, 2001).

The children accepted the view presented in *Maria ee Asximee* that people's appearance is not as important in real life and ugly people have equal rights with beautiful ones. Makis (Gr.5) wrote in his evaluation sheet: 'However ugly is someone he/she can make a life and family'. However, they also appeared to agree with representations of beauty in *Barbie* films and associate evil with ugliness. As Lena (Gr.5) put it: 'Good people are always beautiful and bad people are always ugly'. Although I did not engage them in further discussion about this due to lack of time, it is probable that they perceived representations of beauty in telenovelas, in real life and in *Barbie* films differently because they regarded the latter as fiction/myth. Regarding gender and social class stereotypes, the children designated them in relation to characters' physical appearance and attire. For example, they associated masculinity with social and physical power, and femininity with beauty, caring, and sex appeal and noted that the men in *Barbie of Swan Lake* 'were soldiers', 'had castles' and 'wore crowns', and the women were 'beautiful', 'like princesses' and 'fell in love with a prince'. They also associated social class with possession of money and property, social status, style and fashion. For example, they told me that 'rich people have style', 'money to buy goods' while poor ones 'wear dirty clothes'.

Although the children explained how stereotypes were represented visually during class discussion, none of them mentioned any messages about gender or class in the open ended

question on the evaluation sheet (Appendix 21). It is probable that they experienced difficulty identifying ‘archetypal characters’ or conventional standardised representations of men and women (Alexander & Cousens, 2004; Signorielli, 2001). For example, in the *Barbie* films the chief male characters are portrayed as Prince Daniel, a powerful, handsome, well-built man who always helps *Barbie*. It was not clear if the children were able to comprehend the importance of such kinds of representations in providing role models for individuals. There was only one instance of a few children in Grade 6 criticising conventional gender stereotypes in the *Barbie* films, and particularly representation of women as ‘good, poor, pretty girls who marry a prince’. According to Akis, Tasos and Kate, this kind of portrayal causes young girls to dream about princes ‘on white horses’. Although they did not explain this statement further, I gained the impression that they considered it was bad, probably because it generated unrealistic desires. As Giroux (1995) notes, the reward of marrying a perfect, rich, man is a recurrent motif in fairy tales and Disney (and *Barbie*) films. It encourages rigid representations of gender roles and constitutes a negative stereotype of women that influences young girls’ dreams of their own future selves and form their identities in negative ways (Giroux, 1995; Tavin & Anderson, 2003).

On reflection, including more discussion of these children’s personal beliefs about social class and sex might have given them opportunities to challenge stereotypical portrayals in TV programmes. More or different practical activities were needed so that they provided opportunities for them to reflect further on these issues. For example, I could have included the following suggestions from Garber & Pearson (1995), Fehlman (1992) and Briggs (2007): (i) group work focusing on aspects of costume, make-up, and gesture that suggest class representations; (ii) getting boys to role play the female characters of the telenovela and *Barbie movie* and vice-versa; and (iii) experimenting with photography using different camera angles and lighting to promote certain kinds of class or gender stereotypes.

7.6 ABILITY TO ANALYSE IDENTITY CRITICALLY

The second part of this research set out to investigate children's ability to understand how telenovelas and animated movies influenced their desires and dreams of future selves. The notion of a 'future self' refers to an imagined self-image a person has of what he/she would like to be in the future. As Huntemann & Morgan (2001) and Schroeder & Borgerson (2002) point out, television and the media play a significant role in the ongoing process of identity formation in peoples' lives because they provide them roles to emulate from which they create self-images and concepts. During the lessons, the children were asked to discuss the characters they liked in telenovela *Anipotaktes Kardies* and wanted to look like and draw their future selves and write explanatory comments and TV programmes that might have influenced them. It is possible that this was too leading an instruction. However, a few drawings and written comments showed that it did not influence all the children's responses. For example, Mirto (Gr.5) drew herself in a blouse and skirt and explained that she 'wants to be something that she will think when that time comes'. Marina (Gr.6) drew a self-portrait with red hair and wrote that she wanted to become a teacher. Although both girls wrote the name of their favourite TV programme (*Vera sto Dexi* and *Sto Para Pente*) on top of their drawings, neither of them wrote that they were influenced by these.

Girl's Drawings

Figure 48: Mirto, Gr.5
***Vera sto Dexi*, pencil**

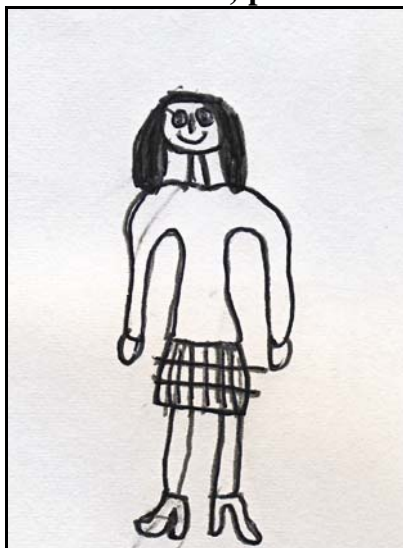


Figure 49: Marina, Gr.6
***A Teacher*, pencil & markers**



Analysis of the children's written accounts and drawings suggested that they were influenced by occupations portrayed in certain TV programmes. However, a majority drew their future selves as 'detectives', 'police-officers', or 'spies', 'soldiers', 'singers' 'models', 'footballers', 'actors/actresses', or 'fashion company directors'. This confirms Wright *et al* (1995) and Jones' (2003) idea that TV viewing affects children's vocational aspirations especially as programmes tend to emphasise the dramatic or glamorous aspects of certain jobs. These children expressed positive attitudes to occupations, like 'detective' and 'spy', in their drawings. Their explanatory comments revealed that those who represented themselves as detectives', 'police officers' and 'spies' wanted to 'investigate crimes', 'chase murderers' and 'put them in jail' like the main characters in a Greek TV comedy *Sto Para Pente* or secret agent *James Bond* in films they had watched at the cinema or on TV. I suspect that the girls who depicted themselves as actresses, singers or models had been influenced by the glamorous way these jobs are depicted on TV. As Boden (2006) and Boon & Lomore (2001) point out, celebrity idols and media figures serve as out-of-ordinary, idealised self-images that stimulate young people's desire to be like them. These girls desired to 'sing like *Floricienta*' or be a model like '*Mia's* mum' in *Anipotaktes Kardies*. Although desiring these jobs is not inherently negative, the fact that TV and media over-accentuate certain aspects of them, like how adventurous is to be a police officer, or how glamorous is the life of a singer, generates misconceptions that they do not involve hard work or effort.

Drawings Representing Vocational Aspirations

Figure 50: Menios, Gr.5
Chasing Murderers, pencil

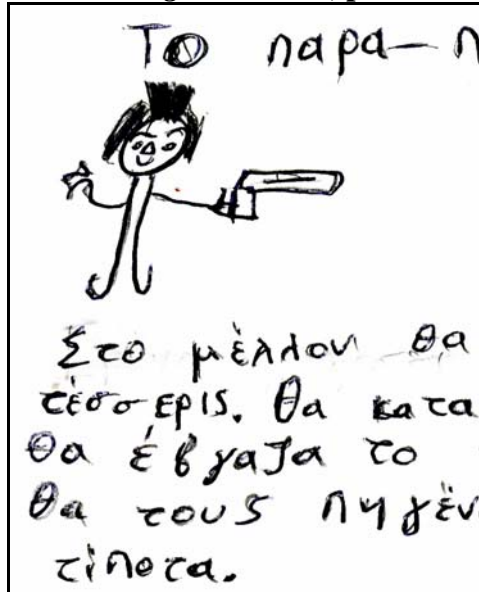


Figure 51: Lena, Gr.5
I Want to Be a Singer, pencil & pencil colours



Two boys dreamed of themselves as ‘having muscles’ and three girls of being ‘beautiful’. As Anderson *et al* (2001a, p.108) notes, children and especially adolescents are greatly concerned with bodily characteristics and physical appearance. Watching TV helps them identify and appreciate the physical characteristics and qualities of characters in TV programmes in accordance with their future expectations and gender identification (FisherKeller, 1997; Kennedy *et al*, 1997; Signorielli, 2001). It is likely that the girls’ expectations of beauty were determined by commonplace stereotypes in Greek society concerning skin colour, hair texture, facial features and weight that are recycled in TV programmes like *Floricienta*, *Anipotaktes Kardies*, and *Sto Para Pente*. However, they seemed reluctant to write down how they perceived ‘beauty’ or what they would like to change about themselves.

The boys, on the other hand, appeared clearer than the girls did about the aspect of their physical appearance they wanted to change. Being strong and muscular is a version of masculinity that is represented in many TV series, like *Tees Agapees Maheria* and *Anipotaktes Kardies* broadcast by the Greek television. Although this is one-dimensional

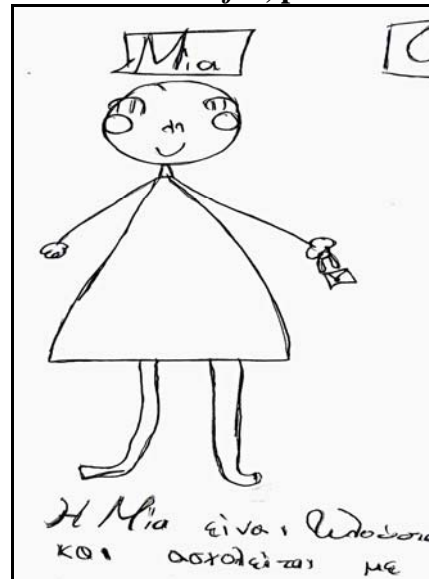
perspective of masculinity, for Takis and Kostas it was a starting point for exploring their sexuality since they related physical appearance to ‘having girlfriends’ or ‘being fancied by girls’. As Buckingham & Bragg (2004) and Ward (2002) note telenovelas and TV social dramas contribute to children’s sexual socialisation and inform them about love, sex, and human relationships. Although these children did not explicitly mention any sexual messages TV programmes convey, the discussion of characters in *Anipotaktes Kardies* revealed that they wanted to look ‘beautiful’ or ‘handsome’ so that they could ‘go out with any girl/boy they liked’. It appears that they considered physical appearance an important factor affecting affairs or dating. This is consistent with Buckingham & Bragg’s (2004) claim that children experiment with sexualised images and intricacies of romance in soap operas and social dramas. They invite self-image comparison with certain masculine/feminine physical ideals that might affect a future relationship with a member of opposite sex (Huntemann & Morgan, 2001). I think this may also explain why they envied and desired a media-defined ‘ideal’ type.

Drawings about Physical Appearance

Figure 52: Takis, Gr.6
I’m doing muscles, pen



Figure 53: Anna, Gr.6
Rich and Beautiful, pencil



Only one girl depicted her future self as a ‘bride’ explaining that she wanted to ‘marry a handsome boy’. As Kennedy *et al* (1997) note, TV social dramas, and especially

telenovelas and soap operas, portray female characters at the side of a man. Änggård (2005) also argues that girls learn from animated cartoons, fairy tales and TV programmes that it is important to long for someone to fulfil their lives. This girl's aspirations and expectations for the future were clearly shaped by observing how TV programmes portray women. These stereotypical portrayals probably provided her with just one perspective for future potential. Also, one boy and two girls had dreams about having social status, power, and money in the future achieved through the occupation of being 'fashion company director', or 'becoming a heir'. This is consistent with Signorielli's claim (cited in Hunttemman & Morgan, 2001) that children and adolescents aspire to jobs with status or that seem to require less effort. During classroom discussion, 'being rich' was also linked to 'doing whatever one wants'. It is probable these children thought that having money or social status implies less adult control and special treatment from others because the rich students in *Anipotaktes Kardies* 'did parties' or were treated differently by their teachers.

Drawings about Social Status

Figure 54: Menios, Gr.5
President of ECO MODA, pencil

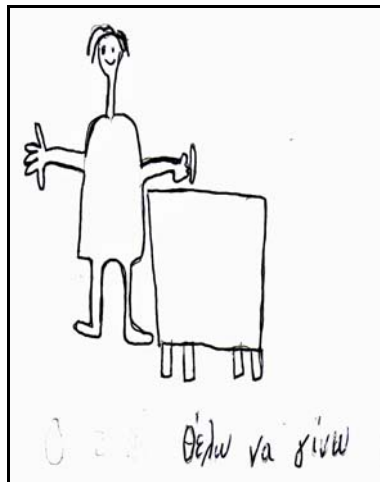


Figure 55: Kathrin, Gr.5
Me Like Dahlia, pencil



The data from the intervention indicated that they were aware that TV programmes influenced their aspirations, dreams and desires about occupation, social status, sexuality, and gender. Evidence of this in drawings and paintings was corroborated by their responses to a true-false question on the evaluation sheet. More than half of them stated that TV viewing may affect consumer socialisation and identity. I concluded, therefore,

that they did understand that TV programmes provided them with information about the material world and in particular about lifestyle consumption. This is consistent with O'Guinn & Shrum (1997) and Schroeder & Borgerson's (2002) idea that media images, especially TV, supply viewers with information about ownership and consumption of goods and help them form their consumer identity. However, due to lack of time it was not possible to engage them in reflective discussion about their drawings and responses to questions on the evaluation sheet. This was a major drawback for the research. On reflection, more lesson time was needed to develop this kind of understanding.

These children's written and verbal accounts revealed that they had difficulty comprehending fully the concept of identity, especially those in Grade 5, even when I used words or phrases like 'self-image', 'personality', 'ideas about one's self'. As Sutherland (1992), Robson (2006), and Butterworth & Harris (1994) explain, children's thinking at ages 10-12 is limited in the sense that they have difficulty in dealing with hypothetical problems and manipulating abstract ideas. At this age they need concrete (physical) objects to think of. On reflection, the concept of identity was probably too sophisticated for these children. Damon & Hart (1982) and Kazi & Demetriou (2001) point out that children only acquire awareness of a material, social and spiritual self in late childhood. Around the age of 12 they can answer questions about self and identity that refer to physical attributes, capabilities, activities that are approved or disapproved by others, and about knowledge and learned skills they have acquired in the past. They become also capable of answering questions about motivation, emotional states, and fantasies and desires of how they would like to be in the future. This view is consistent with the way these children interpreted the task of drawing their future selves, and talked about what they learned from *Anipotaktes Kardies* regarding social behaviour and punishment in the school environment. Identity is an elusive, multidimensional concept and negotiating it requires higher level thinking skills such as reasoning, reflection, and manipulation of the knowledge gained through social interaction. Negotiating identity also relates to age, individual need and maturational process (Nurmi *et al* (1996). The children in both Grades appeared to have difficulty reasoning, justifying, thinking critically and reflecting on knowledge gained from TV viewing. It may also be the case that they had limited experience of critically examining

information acquired outside or inside school. As Matsagouras (1998) and Trilianos (1997) note, Greek education tends to emphasise memorisation and uncritical assimilation of knowledge. Katsikas (2005) has suggested that even secondary school students in general in Greece find it difficult to make solid, uninterrupted, reasoned arguments, understand sophisticated texts and ideas, or engage in self-reflection.

In hindsight, conceptualising identity was a dimension of the ‘Deconstructing Television Imagery’ strategy that required more in-depth exploration over longer period of time. To help children to understand how they assimilate and exploit raw materials provided by TV programmes to imagine and dream various aspects of self image in the future as regards education, social status, occupation, and sexual orientation, I should have planned alternative practical activities. It would have been useful to explore these topics further through practical tasks and self-reflection activities like keeping visual diaries, making self-portraits, re-constructing body-images, and making signs of self in clay or plaster as suggested by Briggs (2007), Kárpáti *et al* (2007), Barron (2006) and Schendel (2007). Because the notions of assimilation and change also relate to identity construction, I could have asked these children to explore them using examples of TV imagery and create a series of drawings, collages or photos.

7.7 REFLECTION ON TEACHER-RESEARCHER ROLE

As Dorn (2005) points out, there is a risk that teachers may inject their own preconceptions and social biases into classroom discussion when teaching about visual culture and try to indoctrinate students to accept or reject certain kinds of cultural messages images convey. I found that having to maintain the role of researcher was a positive factor because I was more willing to let children arrive in conclusions themselves. One aim of the second part of the research was to determine to what extent children aged between 10 and 12 can explore how selected visual culture genres influence identity construction. Instead of using prompts to guide them towards certain kinds of answers as I usually do in my teaching, I stood back and let the children express their own thoughts. A disadvantage of the researcher role, however, was that I did not give them enough assistance to further develop their thinking. Although my responsibility as a teacher was to extend their understanding,

it is probable I was more concerned eliciting a certain kind of response from them that suited my point of view as a researcher.

My limited experience of undertaking intervention research in schools resulted in my becoming stressed about my role as teacher-researcher. Time pressures, classes that I did not know, the children's misbehaviour and the challenge of teaching something new, all made it difficult to document and observe everything happening in the class. Tape-recording the lessons was helpful but I am sure I missed important things and it was difficult to reflect on each decision I made while teaching. Playing back the tapes was helpful because it reminded me of details and enabled me to decode some of the scribbled notes made in class and write them up better in the researcher diary. My biases mainly related to the false expectations I had for children's poor levels of learning. I was over-influenced by the classroom teachers' comments beforehand about them. My preconception that they would be badly behaved and have difficulty understanding probably affected the way the children behaved. It may also have influenced my teaching and explanations of the work to be completed. I realised the initial instructions I gave them to write and draw were too complex so the further explanations I gave them might were too directive in producing expected outcomes.

Because I had not taught in Greek primary schools for more than six years or translated recent curriculum developments in art into practice, I had to spend a considerable amount of time planning the lesson unit. The primary benefit gained from this was a deeper understanding of how to put theory of visual culture education into practice. To develop the lesson unit I searched out and read lesson plans and articles with suggestions for the content of visual culture curricula by American, European, Australian and British authors including: Tavin & Anderson (2003), Wagner-Ott (2002), Stokrocki (2002), Duncum (2003a), Congdon & Blandy (2003), Degge & Cochrane (1995), Whitehead (2004), Alexander & Cousens (2004) Garoian (2002), Marshall (2002), Keifer-Boyd *et al* (2003), Nadaner, (1985), Soganci, (2005) and Cameron & Al-Saleh (2003). The process of planning and developing a detailed lesson unit in a research context influenced me to become more organised and disciplined as a teacher. The research diary (Appendix, 22) I

kept proved to be a useful research tool not only for documenting classroom events but also for recording reactions and thoughts. As I reflected on and evaluated my teaching plans, methods, materials, and practice on a daily basis I became more critical. This methodology could be beneficial for all teachers as it can enhance their teaching and motivate them to try out new things. I realise now that the experience gained from this intervention will help me in the future whether I continue to work as a primary school teacher, or art advisor in Athens. In the first case, it will help me further develop my own teaching of art and visual culture generally. In the second, it will enable me to transmit knowledge, experience and advice to primary school teachers on how to expand their art curricula to include cultural forms other than fine arts. Carrying out fieldwork systematically enabled me develop useful research skills like observation and writing field-notes. At the time the ‘Deconstructing Television Imagery’ strategy was developed there were few examples of actual practice in the visual culture education literature in general and none in Greece. A set of written lesson plans was tested out in classrooms and revised. The end product was a resource pack and guide organised around the study of TV imagery for teachers who wish to develop a visual culture curriculum for themselves.

7.8 SUMMATIVE EVALUATION OF THE INTERVENTION’S MERIT AND WORTH

In this chapter, I have reflected upon and evaluated the planning and delivery of the intervention, children’s learning, and my performance as a teacher-researcher. Although, these aspects are interrelated, I attempted to distinguish between them to explicate and reflect on the numerous decisions I made since I started to plan the intervention and wrote this chapter. The telenovela *Anipotaktes Kardies (Rebelde Way)* and animated film *Barbie of Swan Lake* comprised the content of the lesson unit. These two visual culture genres were selected because of their particular narrative conventions and the opportunity they offer to analyse the cultural values and stereotypes they communicate. The children were familiar with both genres and actively engaged in classroom discussion about their generic characteristics, production, audiences, and the particular messages they conveyed. Although their previous knowledge and experience from TV viewing helped them answer my questions and identify genres, audiences, reality elements, and cultural messages, I

suspect the lack of any formal structured form of media education at school contributed to their holding misconceptions about audience targeting and about class and gender representations in TV programmes.

The data suggested that the major factors that affected these children's poor motivation and participation in lessons were the following: (i) their preconceptions about art education and their own competence in art; (ii) their expectations for the particular art lessons; and (iii) absence of art criticism and written activities in art lessons in Greek schools. The aims of the 'Deconstructing Television Imagery' lessons were clear, concise, feasible, complete, appropriate, and congruent with the aims and objectives situated by the Greek national curriculum for art. The lessons were organised around viewing selected extracts from *Anipotaktes Kardies* and *Barbie of Swan Lake*, classroom discussion and practical learning activities like writing and painting. The main weaknesses of the implementation of the intervention were the lack of equipment to facilitate viewing extracts from the selected genres, disturbance caused by having to get children move from their seats to view the selected extracts, lack of time for reflection on in class and assessment of children's artwork, and that classroom discussion was almost exclusively dependent on individual contributions.

Despite these shortcomings, I concluded that I had managed to extend these children's understanding of the roles of personnel involved in production of TV programmes and animated films. They also specified their director, scriptwriter, and producer's roles. They understood that telenovelas are TV series made in Latin American, their plot line revolves around love and social class conflicts and that the leading character is almost always a woman. They understood that *Barbie* films are computer animated and are based on fairy-tales with a happy end and that *Barbie* is always the leading character. They also learned that makers of TV programmes and animated films intend to attract specific audiences and that TV channels schedule them on appropriate broadcast time for this reason. They understood that reality or fictional elements are included to attract viewers and facilitate emotional arousal and engagement with characters. Whereas they understood that TV programmes and films convey cultural and social messages they had difficulty going

beyond 'preferred readings' of *Anipotaktes Kardies*, *Maria ee Ashimee* and *Barbie of Swan Lake*. In general, they did understand that TV programmes could influence their desires, dreams and fantasies of their future selves, especially when these related to occupation, social status, sexuality, physical appearance, and gender. But because of their age, immaturity and developmental level they did not comprehend the concept of identity per se. They had difficulty developing reasoned arguments about, speculating and reflecting on personal visual experience, which is not surprising given that Greek schools typically treat students as passive learners (Katsikas, 2005; Trilianos, 1997; Matsagouras, 1998).

In conclusion, the formative evaluation showed that the 'Deconstructing Television Imagery' project had an inherent, implicit value (merit) because it meets the requirements for visual culture curricula set by expert art educators such as Freedman (2003a; 2003c), Stuhr (2003), Boughton, 2005, Duncum (1999), Heise (2004), Tavin (2003), Efland *et al* (1996). The choice of telenovelas and *Barbie* animated films as curriculum content are exemplars of visual culture that relate to children's worlds. The focus on everyday visual and aesthetic experiences gained from viewing these particular genres gives learners opportunities to understand their role in helping them to structure their thoughts, feelings and knowledge about themselves and the world. The 'Deconstructing Television Imagery' lesson unit embraces critical pedagogy as it asks learners to push their thinking further by questioning and challenging dominant cultural beliefs and values represented in telenovelas and *Barbie* films and examining and reflecting on ways they construct personal visions of the future. It is interdisciplinary and has the potential to integrate knowledge gained from different school subjects as well as outside school. It addresses the concept of identity, the significance of which has been stressed recently by visual culture educators (Wagner-Ott, 2002; Bolin, 1992; Wilson & Toku, 2004; Stokrocki, 2001, 2002). Specifically, the 'Deconstructing Television Imagery' project focuses on the concept of future self and ways visual culture influences desires and dreams of future possibilities. Finally, it is organised around interpretation and includes art making as a way to explore meaning as recommended by Tavin & Anderson (2003), Duncum, (2002a), Freedman (2003a), and Barret (2002).

The formative evaluation also showed that the worth of the ‘Deconstructing Television Imagery’ project with regard its implementation in a Greek primary school rested on the following: (i) It enabled primary age children there to broaden their perspectives of art education with reference to its content and learning activities. (ii) It gave them opportunities to engage in learning activities that require high order thinking skills such as observation, generalisation, seeing patterns, recognition of intended meanings, and speculation. (iii) It integrated aspects of mass media education, which is not a taught subject, and art. (iv) It enabled children make explicit tacit knowledge and produced learning about genre characteristics, audience targeting, reality construction, and messages telenovelas and *Barbie* films communicate. (v) Finally, the learning objectives and content of lessons were appropriate for these children’s ability level.

7.9 REVISED LESSON PLANS

After completing the evaluation, I arrived at the following conclusions about how the lesson unit should be revised. I considered it was essential to:

- (i) expand teaching about production of telenovelas and *Barbie* animated films because the children were confused about the roles of production crew;
- (ii) add two topics about scheduling and promotion of telenovelas and *Barbie* animated films and links with other media, i.e. about how they are promoted and presented in magazines and websites because this could give insights into how TV channels publicise and promote programmes;
- (iii) plan additional activities (role-play, group discussion) to help children further develop their understanding of the concept of identity construction. For example, engage them in examination of role models and stereotypes provided by these genres, because they had difficulties during lessons to reflect on ways they were influenced by them;
- (iv) plan more group work, because class discussion did not contribute to children’s full participation and decreased their interactions. For example, children working in small groups could be asked to analyse daily schedules from listing magazines or newspapers, compare audiences and present the findings in class (Alexander & Cousens, 2004).

- (v) include alternative activities that increase children's understanding of effects of selected programmes on them. For, example children could be asked to undertake a class survey on the consumption and the effects of telenovelas or *Barbie* animated films (Alexander & Cousens, 2004; Cameron & Al-Saleh, 2003).
- (vi) embrace ICT as a research tool, for example as children to retrieve information from the Internet about telenovelas (Kirschenmann, 2001; Wang, 2002). It could also be used for creative purposes for example to modify children's photographs and material from the TV programmes they like. Photoshop or Paint Shop Pro programmes could be used to make future self-portraits or produce short videos (Kirschenmann, 2001; Wang, 2002; Callow, 2001; Duh, 2006).
- (vii) plan for interdisciplinary activities and link lessons with language, mathematics, and social studies so that they can be more meaningful for children.

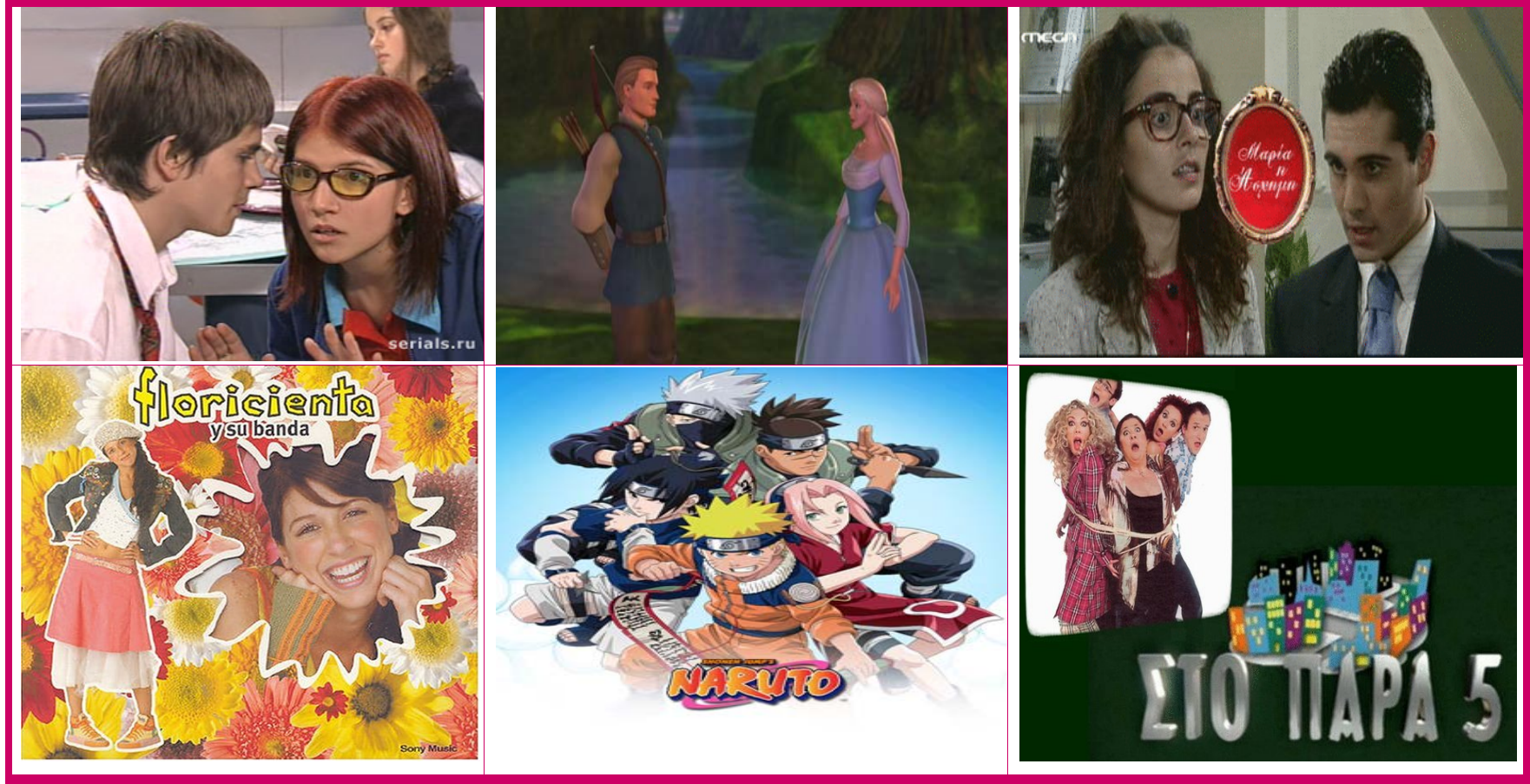
Apart from changes in sub-topics, learning objectives and activities and assessment summarised in Table L, I decided to write up the 'Deconstructing Television Imagery' lessons in the form of a resource pack and guide for Greek teachers to use it in art lessons. Changing the layout and structure of the lessons was important so that it would be attractive, practical and handy to other users. I decided to divide it into four sections highlighted in different colours so that teachers could trace them easily. The first section included a rationale for teaching visual culture, the overview of the lessons and broad aims. I considered necessary to explain at the beginning the importance of teaching about visual culture and my decision to concentrate on television imagery, especially telenovelas and *Barbie* animated films. I anticipated that this would give teachers insights into what visual culture education is about. The second section included lesson suggestions about teaching telenovelas and the third about *Barbie* animated films. The sections had similar structure and included detailed background information about the selected genres and an analysis of telenovela *Anipotaktes Kardies* and *Barbie of Swan Lake* film. I anticipated that this kind of information would facilitate teaching. They also included teaching sub-topics with relevant learning objectives, suggested key questions and learning activities. I anticipated that the relaxed structure and lack of time-frame of the lessons, the variety of sub-topics, the instruction, questions and activities suggested would provide teachers with a framework they could adapt to fit in their classes' needs and abilities. The last section

offered ideas for student learning assessment and follow up lessons, glossary, bibliography and further reading suggestions. Before I finalised the ‘Deconstructing Television Imagery’ resource pack I consulted five teacher friends and the Programme Convener of MA Art Craft and Design Education at Roehampton University. Their valuable comments led to the end product that is presented now.

Table L: Summary of Changes between DTI lesson Unit and Resource Pack

	DTI Lesson Unit	DTI Resource Pack
Subtopics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maker/Producer's Intention behind Telenovelas • Social and Cultural Messages • Targeting Audiences • Desires, Fantasies and Future Dreams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genre Characteristics, • Artistic Type Jobs' in Production • Scheduling Telenovelas, • Promoting and Advertising Telenovelas/Barbie Films • Audience Targeting • Realism & Fiction Construction • Social and Cultural Messages • Influences & Identity Formation
Summary of learning objectives	<p>Students should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learn main characteristics of selected genres • learn about the production process, personnel, and scheduling • understand how audiences are targeted • understand how fiction/myth or illusion of realism is constructed by these kinds of genres • understand that telenovelas and <i>Barbie</i> films promote certain class and gender representations • understand that telenovelas and <i>Barbie</i> films carry cultural messages that might influence audiences responses and behaviour • understand how and why the makers of <i>Barbie</i> animated films recycled well known fairytales and stories • understand that this kind of films can influence viewers' desires and future dreams 	<p>Students should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learn main characteristics of selected genres • understand the genres are not governed by fixed rules • learn members of production teams and distinguish their roles • learn about the who, how and why of scheduling TV programmes • learn how production and scheduling of telenovelas is linked with other media and understand that publicity ensures its success • understand by whom and how audiences are targeted • understand how fiction/myth or illusion of realism is constructed by these kinds of genres • understand that telenovelas and <i>Barbie</i> films promote certain class and gender representations • understand that they carry cultural messages that might influence audiences responses and behaviour • understand that they can influence viewers' desires and future dreams • understand how and why the makers of <i>Barbie</i> animated films recycled well known fairytales and stories
learning activities	Watching Extracts, Class Discussion, Written Work, Drawing/Painting	Watching Extracts, Class Discussion, Written Work, Drawing/Painting, Role play, Group/pair work, photography, computer based art
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • observations of children's participation • portfolio assessment • selected response worksheet • fill in an '<i>I learned....</i>' statement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • observing participation in discussions, art-making, role-play and oral presentations, • reviewing written and visual work (portfolio assessment) • multiple choice written tests; • fill in an '<i>I learned....</i>' Statement

DECONSTRUCTING TELEVISION IMAGERY



Guidelines for Teaching Primary Age Children in Greece How to Deconstruct TV Imagery
Martha Christopoulou, February 2008

LESSON UNIT: DECONSTRUCTING TELEVISION IMAGES

RATIONALE FOR TEACHING ABOUT VISUAL CULTURE

Children construct knowledge inside and outside school. This implies that the cultural sites in which they are engaged as part of their everyday lives should be central to the educational procedure (Freedman, 2003a; Heise, 2004, p.41). This is the main reason why art educators in America, Australia and other countries in Europe are arguing it is necessary to expand the art curriculum to include visual culture; namely images and artefacts from popular, material and mass media culture (Boughton *et al*, 2002; Freedman, 2003b; Duncum, 2002b; Aguirre, 2004; Buhl, 2005; Turkkan, 2006; Blandy & Bolin, 2005). Analysis and interpretation of visual images and artefacts in everyday life should play a central role in the educational process because this can help students

- recognise the values popular visual imagery projects and their effect on how they construct their views of the world
- extend their critical understanding of their meanings and the role they play in construction of identity
- reflect on their own attitudes, values and beliefs in order to discover themselves, understand the world and become more critical consumers and informed participants in society.

Examples of a wide range of visual culture genres (television programmes, animated cartoons, advertisements, architecture, book illustration, domestic design, shopping malls, theme parks, street marches, shadow theatre (Karagiozis), photography, films, etc) can be used as resources for teaching about visual culture. I have selected television images because the group interviews with primary age children I conducted in Greece in the first phase of my research showed their lives were mediated through this genre. Moreover, teaching about TV programmes motivates and stimulates their interest.

I chose to concentrate on telenovelas and *Barbie* animated films because these were among the most preferred television genres by the children who participated in the research. Telenovelas and *Barbie* films are constructed from images, speech and sound as is the case with all TV programmes and films. This lesson unit focuses mostly on their visual elements. It aims to raise children's awareness of how the visual aspects of telenovelas and *Barbie* films are designed and constructed, the kinds of social and cultural messages they convey, and how these influence their future dreams and aspirations.

OVERVIEW OF LESSON UNIT

The unit consists of two parts; one about telenovelas and another about *Barbie* animated films. The instructions and questions constitute a framework, but should not be considered definitive. Word choices may vary and prior conversation with children in class should determine how each session is structured and what questions are asked. The challenge for the teacher is to create a positive climate for classroom discussion, make the tacit knowledge that student posses from watching TV and films explicit, and help then push their thinking further. Learning activities include watching extracts from the selected genres, small group work, pair work, whole class discussion, individual practical art (drawing, painting, collage, clay or plaster making, and computer art), role play, brainstorming, written work, and photography. Computers, a DVD player, and overhead projector are necessary equipment for delivering learning activities and watching extracts.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students should:

- engage in processes of description, analysis, speculation and reflection
- learn that makers of television programmes always intend viewers to read them in certain ways
- learn that visual images from television carry social and cultural messages that influence viewers' responses and values
- understand that visual images from TV programmes and mass media influence viewers' desires and future dreams and the way they help them construct their self images

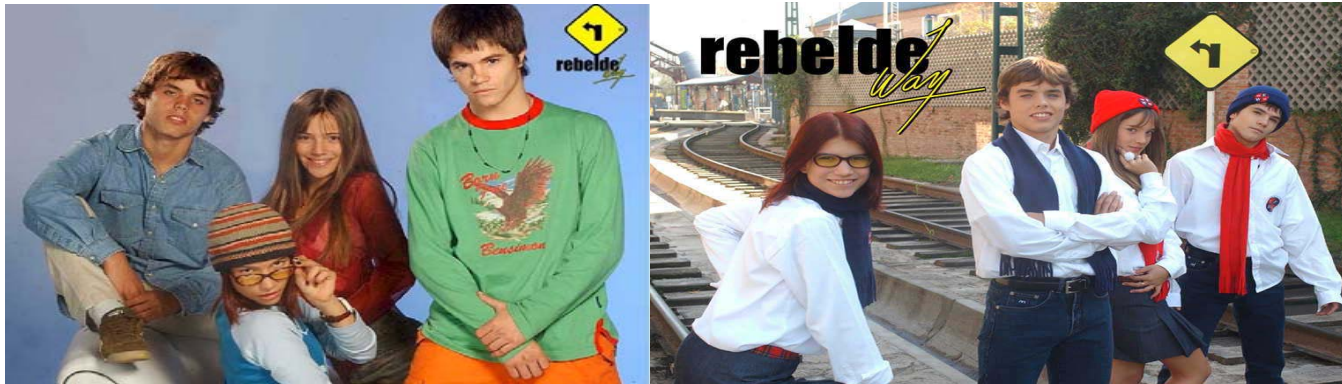


1ST PART: DECONSTRUCTING TELENOVELAS

OVERVIEW OF THE LESSON

The following lesson deals with deconstruction of the Argentinean telenovela *Anipotaktes Kardies (Rebelde Way)*. It consists of eight sessions that are interrelated and focus on a visual study of the telenovela. Each session has specific learning objectives and possible discussion topics and activities are suggested.

Extracts of *Anipotaktes Kardies (Rebelde Way)* can be used to open up discussion as they illustrate some points of the plot line of this telenovela (i.e. the school and its students, and teenager relationships). They can be downloaded from the Internet, specifically from the video sharing website YouTube. TV guides, magazines and newspapers can be also used to support the activities in the section about scheduling telenovelas. Interdisciplinary activities are marked with an asterisk (*) and linked to specific school subject/s.



BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT TELENOVELAS

Telenovelas are melodramatic fictional series made for TV. According to Lopez (1995) and La Pastina (2006), their roots go back to radio soaps produced in the USA in 1940s. They were also influenced by serialised sentimental novels in English and French literature in the 18th and 19th centuries. Most telenovelas are produced in Latin American countries like Mexico, Colombia, Argentina, Brazil, and Venezuela. Like soap operas they are broadcast on a daily basis during prime time viewing hours. However, they have a clear cut plot line with a definite ending that permits narrative closure and usually last for six months to one year whereas soap operas may last for decades (Rêgo, 2003). Unlike soap operas, which tend to focus on family relationships (e.g. *The Bold and Beautiful*, *Dallas*, *Dynasty*, *East Enders*, *Emmerdale Farm*, *Neighbours*), telenovelas rely on melodramatic narratives in which romantic couples confront opposition to their staying together (La Pastina, 2006). Another difference is that most telenovela scenes are shot outside the studios. The plot of Latin American telenovelas typically includes suspense and the plot lines include returns from the past, reversals of fortune, and painful confrontations. Each episode has a dramatic ending to make sure viewers will watch the next one. They are attuned to local cultures yet have a national dimension. Since the 1970s telenovela makers have tried to go beyond classic melodrama. They have adapted works of writers like Jorje Amado's *Gabriela* and *Cravo e Canela* and now deal with controversial social issues that are closer to real life, like drug abuse, abortion, corruption, homosexuality, cloning, environmental issues, racism, and urban violence (Rêgo, 2003). Acosta-Alzuru (2003) distinguishes telenovelas into 'telenovelas rosas' that focus in romance and problems faces a heterosexual couple and 'telenovelas de rupturas' that explore social issues.

Telenovelas are financed by commercial Latin American TV industries like Brazilian TV Globo, Argentinean Telefe, and Mexican Televisa, or independent producers and primarily produced for a home market (Lopez, 1995). Since 1980's they have been widely exported to Russia, USA, Spain, China, Greece and other countries. The first Latin American telenovela shown on Greek television was *Sklava Isaura* (*Esclava Isaura*) in 1986. Since then more than 40 have been broadcast by state TV channels. Private channels also began broadcasting telenovelas in the early 1990s. Telenovelas remain popular today and some channels broadcast them translated/transposed into Greek language. In January 2007 the private channel *Mega* aired the first Greek telenovela called *Maria ee Asximee* (*Maria the Ugly*) based on the story of the Colombian telenovela *Yo Soy Betty La Fea*.

An appealing theme of telenovelas is their melodramatic plots which afford viewers illusory relief from everyday concerns and exploit personalisation as they may 'live' or dream the lives of their main characters (Oliveira, 1990; Lopez, 1995). These characters serve as role models, especially for young people. Vink (1988) states that telenovelas offer working class audiences models of social change since a recurring theme is that of a poor girl who ends up marrying a rich, handsome man. Gender or class oppositions that are also portrayed in telenovelas through interpersonal conflicts, like the need for control/power, may give viewers a chance to challenge social norms and values.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT ANIPOTAKTES KARDIES (REBELDE WAY)

Anipotaktes Kardies (Rebelde Way) is an Argentinean telenovela for juveniles. It was produced by *Telefe* and directed by Chris Morena. The series ran for two seasons 2002/2003 and 2003/2004 in Argentina. The first season consisted of 139 episodes and the second of 180. In Greece it was broadcast from 2005 to 2007 by the state channel ET1 and transposed into Greek language.

Main Plot

Elite Way School is a high-status private middle school near Buenos Aires attended by rich teenagers and a few poor ones who have scholarships. One of this telenovela's plot lines revolves around a group of four teenagers who have formed a band. Other plotlines follow the teenagers' love lives and relationships with friends, family and teachers. The subplots revolve around personnel at the school and teenagers' families. As in every other telenovela or soap opera, dramatic events, are built around arguments, lies, shouting, matches, gossip, etc and are associated with a range of complex relationships between the teenagers, parents, and teachers. The story starts when 3rd Grade students meet up with the newcomers and they all leave school together for the summer holidays.

Main Characters

Mia Colucci is the most popular girl at *Elite Way School*. She is the only child of the famous businessman *Franco Colucci*. She pretends to hate her classmate *Manuel*, but in reality is in love with him. *Pablo Bustamante* is the son of a famous politician and one of the most popular, attractive boys in the school. He falls in love with *Marizza* but does not want to reveal it to her. In the last episode they finally become a couple. *Marizza Pia Andrante* (fake name *Spirito*) is the daughter of famous model/dancer Sonia Rey. She is one of the naughtiest girls in the school and has almost been expelled many times. She has a 'love-hate' relationship with Pablo. *Manuel Aguirre* came to Argentina from Mexico. He is a low-social class student with a scholarship. He wants to get revenge for his father's murder committed by *Franco Colucci*. He falls in love with Colucci's daughter, *Mia*. He has problems with *Logia* a group of high-class students who harass students with scholarship. He discovers that *Franco Colucci* has nothing to do with his father's death and becomes Mia's boyfriend.

Analysis of *Anipotaktes Kardies*

The telenovela *Anipotaktes Kardies* goes beyond classic melodrama. It is deliberately designed to appeal to audiences in different sociocultural contexts outside the boundaries of Argentina. The existence of online fan clubs in Greece, Spain, Serbia, Albania, Venezuela, Armenia and other countries backs up this claim. The settings, characters, themes, and plot line refer to contemporary Argentinean society which is portrayed as much like post-industrial societies everywhere. However, this particular telenovela portrays a material world far from mainstream viewers' lives as it gives a picture of a high class private school and students' lives within this

environment.

Social class conflict, teenager dreams of future lives and love and sexual relationships are the main themes in this telenovela. The distinction between upper and lower social classes is portrayed by the rich students' random use of English words and phrases to display rude behaviour and in the poor students' confrontations with *Logia*. Portrayals of wealth, lifestyle and fame are contrasted to poverty and anonymity to make social class differentiation distinct. *Manuel* is a role model for upward social mobility due to his success as scholarship student and later as member of the band. His desire to revenge his father's death signifies the need for social justice in a corrupt society. The teenager's dreams of future revolve around achieving celebrity status, success, and money. The fact that the four main characters form a band and become famous at the end suggests that anything is achievable in life. Love and sexual relationships is a recurring theme in most telenovelas. In *Anipotaktes Kardies* this revolves around hate-love interactions, hidden emotions, infidelity, and sex.

The iconography as well as the social and emotional realism in this telenovela creates and supports a distinct feeling (impression) of a school and home environments within which characters are happy, sad, or anxious about personal or family matters. *Anipotaktes Kardies* offers a window in adolescent world and life in general and it is possible the children and teenagers, who watch it, see this as an extension of their own school or home lives and can anticipate what will come next. Telenovela characters are placed in a two-generational space in which adolescents/students try to resist parental and teacher (adult) control and gain autonomy. This enhances young viewers' identification and emotional involvement with the characters as it is the kind of experience they recognise.

As a cultural product *Anipotaktes Kardies* communicates values about social change at a personal level within family and society. It also communicates behavioural and verbal codes, lifestyle models, aesthetic standards and gender and social class stereotypes. For, example it portrays rich parents as having limited time to spend with their children who try to attract their attention by misbehaving. Despite the values this telenovela communicates, its significance lies in viewers' personal and collective interpretation. Viewers' cultural capital and purposes of watching (entertainment, pastime, escapism and education) play a significant role in making meaning from the telenovela.

1. GENRE CHARACTERISTICS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	TEACHER KEY QUESTIONS	STUDENT ACTIVITIES
Students should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn the key characteristics of telenovelas as a television genre Understand that TV genres are not governed by fixed rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you ever watched this TV programme? Do you know its main plot line? Do you know other TV programmes like this? Can you compare it with other TV programmes of this kind? Can you identify any similarities or differences? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watch a telenovela extract Small group work: list key ideas and issues telenovelas address Role play: key characters in telenovelas (*Drama education) Small group work: brainstorm and list similarities and differences between telenovelas Class discussion: key questions Choose a TV programme and list reasons it is/ is not a telenovela

2. TELENOVELAS' PRODUCTION

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	TEACHER KEY QUESTIONS	STUDENT ACTIVITIES
Students should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn about the members of the production teams of telenovelas Distinguish their roles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who do you think was involved in making this telenovela? Can you explain what work each member of the telenovela production do? Explain what problems do you think member encounters during the production? Why do you think the writer selected this plot line? Why do you think he/she selected these characters? What visual effects did the director use to support the scenario? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watch end titles of the telenovela Class discussion: key questions Small group work: list the members of the production team from memory Role play: imagine yourself as a member of the production team and take action (* Drama education) Write a summary of the scenario for your own telenovela (* Language) Individual practical task: Design costumes for your own telenovela Class discussion: the costume designs student made

3. SCHEDULING TELENOVELAS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	TEACHER KEY QUESTIONS	STUDENT ACTIVITIES
Students should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn about who decides telenovelas' scheduling Understand how and why telenovelas are scheduled at certain times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When is this telenovela scheduled? Who do you think decided about that? Why do you think the telenovela was scheduled at this time? Compare this telenovela's scheduling with other ones or different kinds of TV programmes e.g. cartoons, TV game shows. What do you notice? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read listings in TV guides Class discussion: key questions Small group work: decide about the appropriate time to broadcast your own telenovelas. Explain. Write reasons why telenovelas <i>Maria ee Ashimee</i> and <i>Anipotaktes Kardies</i> are broadcast at different times (* Language)

4. PROMOTING TELENOVELAS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	TEACHER KEY QUESTIONS	STUDENT ACTIVITIES
Students should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn that the production and scheduling of telenovelas is linked with other media (print journalism, the Internet, TV, etc) Understand that publicity and promotion of a telenovela ensures its success and generates other sources for income 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why do you think magazines and newspapers write about the story line and actors of telenovelas? What kind of information is revealed in the Internet about the telenovela? What is the purpose of advertising the telenovela on TV? How does this happen? How do telenovela stars appear in magazines and newspapers? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look at telenovela's websites Pair work: Search newspapers and magazines for information about this telenovela. List your findings. Watch TV ads about telenovelas. Present your observations to the whole class. Individual/small group practical task: Design a website for your own telenovela Individual/small group practical task: Design an advertisement for your own telenovela Role play: Interview a telenovela actor/actress (* Drama Education) Write an article about the star of your own telenovela (* Language)

5. AUDIENCE TARGETING

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	TEACHER KEY QUESTIONS	STUDENT ACTIVITIES
Students should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand what audiences are targeted by whom and how 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which audience have the makers of this telenovela aimed at? Why do you think they chose this particular audience? Why do you think someone would watch this telenovela? Imagine that a different maker had produced it. What might it be different? What might be the same? Would the audience change if the plot or characters were different? Explain. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class discussion: key questions Small group/pair work: Sell your own telenovela to a certain audience. List the actions you would make. Pair practical task: design the logo of your own telenovela.

6. REALISM CONSTRUCTION IN TELENOVELAS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	TEACHER KEY QUESTIONS	STUDENT ACTIVITIES
Students should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand how the illusion of realism is constructed by this telenovela Understand that telenovelas are artificial constructs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there aspects of the telenovela that are realistic? Can you name them? Why do you think the maker included them? What kinds of emotions and feelings might the audience of this telenovela share with the characters? Could the main plot line of the telenovela happen in real life? Why/why not? What social messages are conveyed by this telenovela? Can you think how this might happen? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watch the telenovela extract Class discussion: key questions Small group work: List similarities in the plot line of the telenovela and real life List the reality elements you would include in your own telenovela Individual practical task: Design the settings of your own telenovela. Class discussion about children's designs

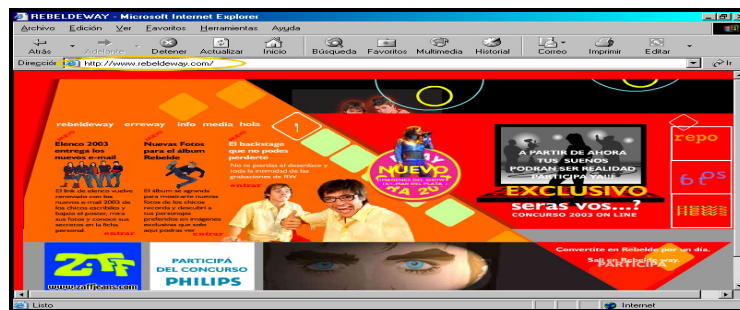
7. SOCIAL & CULTURAL MESSAGES IN TELENOVELAS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	TEACHER KEY QUESTIONS	STUDENT ACTIVITIES
<p>Students should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand that telenovelas and to some extent all TV programmes communicate certain gender and class representations Understand that telenovelas and to extent TV programmes carry cultural messages that may influence audiences responses and behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How are different social classes portrayed in this telenovela? How are men and women portrayed? Are these representations accurate? What lifestyles, values and points of view are represented in the telenovela? Which of these do you accept or reject? Why? What do you think is the main message of this telenovela? What evidence is there to support your statement? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watch the telenovela extract Group work: focus on elements of costume, make-up, gesture to suggest class and gender representations Class discussion: key questions Role play: boys to play the female characters of the telenovela and vice versa (*Drama education) Pair practical task: Take photographs using different camera angles and lighting to promote certain class or gender stereotypes. Explain what you did in a brief written statement. Class discussion about this. List the messages your own telenovela communicates (*Social Studies)



8. TELENODELA INFLUENCES & IDENTITY FORMATION

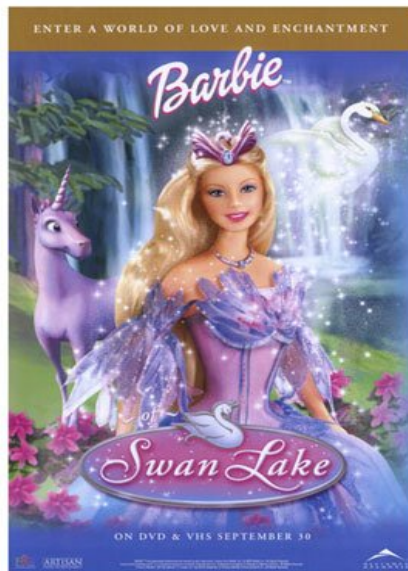
LEARNING OBJECTIVES	TEACHER KEY QUESTIONS	STUDENT ACTIVITIES
<p>Students should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand that telenovelas may affect their audiences' desires, dreams and self-concepts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How and to what extent are audiences influenced by the behaviour of the characters in, or the content of this telenovela? How do audiences use this telenovela to get advice about an event in their lives? Would you want to be like one of these characters or live a similar life? Why/why not? Is there anything you dream of being in the future after watching <i>Rebelde Ways</i>? What? Why? Has this telenovela contributed in any way to your life plans? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class discussion: key questions Individual practical task: Make your own self-portrait and write comments about the features you have emphasised Individual practical task: Make a visual diary about the thoughts/dreams/fantasies watching this programme generates. Individual practical task: Re-construct your body-image using Photoshop programme Individual practical task: Use clay or plaster to design a 'symbol' of your self. Individual practical task: Make a portrait of your future self Individual practical task: Create a series of drawings/ collages/photos that will represent changes and search of self in the future. Class discussion and reflection after each practical art activity



2nd PART: DECONSTRUCTING *BARBIE* ANIMATED FILMS

OVERVIEW OF THE LESSON

The second part of the lesson unit deals with deconstruction of *Mattel's* animated film *Barbie of Swan Lake*. *Mattel's* animated films use well-known fairytales or myths for their plot lines and are constructed with images, speech and sound. This lesson part consists of seven sessions that focus on the visual elements of the *Barbie of Swan Lake*. They focus on characteristics of the genre of computer animated films, its production and personnel, maker's intentions and how they manipulate children's fantasies and desires. Extracts of *Barbie of Swan Lake* can be used to open up discussion and facilitate to exploration of typical points in the plot line of the animated film.



BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT *MATTEL'S* COMPUTER ANIMATED FILMS

According to Wells (1998, p.10), 'animation is a film made frame-by-frame, providing an illusion of movement'. The first animated film was *Humorous Funny Phases* (1906). Since then animation techniques have been developed. Apart from hand-drawn and model animation new technologies have facilitated the production of animated films. Computer animation is defined as a film of moving images which are created using three- and two-dimensional computer graphics.

Mattel Corporation released its first computer animated film called *Barbie as Rapunzel* in 2002. All *Barbie* animated films have been released directly on DVDs (www.wikipedia.com). In most of these, *Barbie* retells well-known fairytales like the *12 Dancing Princes* or stories like the *Nutcracker* and *Swan Lake* to her younger sister *Kelly*. Only two films, *Barbie Fairytopia* and *Barbie and the Magic of Pegasus* have original plot lines. It seems that these films follow the *Disney* tradition in that they employ dialogue, visual elements, and music, are forms of light entertainment aimed at young girls, use anthropomorphised animal characters and have formulaic heroines/heroes and villains. Their narrative is centred on character conflict. *Barbie* narrates to her sister *Kelly* stories and fairytales and also stars in them. She is named differently in each film (*Rapounzel*, *Clara*, *Elina*, *Odette*, and *Annika*) and has to fight against wizards, witches, or evil creatures. The visual elements used in these films enable viewers to understand the characters' attributes and traits. In all these films *Barbie* communicates a certain kind of female stereotype and 'helps' young girls learn how they are supposed to perform their gender roles and construct the notion of feminine beauty. She is usually portrayed as a young, beautiful, good-hearted, courageous, brave woman who marries a handsome prince at the end of the story.

The characters are recognised and understood by viewers through their costumes or physical traits and behavioural mannerisms, gestures and movements. In *Barbie of Swan Lake* film, for example, *Barbie* as *Odette* is depicted in a long white and pale blue dress that indicates purity of heart, whereas the wizard *Rothbart* is dressed in black to emphasise evil spirit. The internal aspects of the characters in these animated films often seem one-dimensional or overstate specific qualities, moods or attitudes in order to activate the narrative. Also their facial gestures and movements, especially eye-movement, signify changes of emotion and reactions of the characters. This gives the illusion that the animated characters act out their roles according to a prepared script. In *Barbie* animated films, the way the characters' body is depicted represents ways masculinity and femininity is understood. The depiction of femininity and beauty *Mattel Inc* wish to promote is in line with standards set by *Barbie* doll (blond, tall, thin, beautiful). The depiction of male figures, on the other hand, communicates stereotypical gender conventions (tall, masculine with broad shoulders and macho). Fantasy, magic, innocence, romance, happiness, good over evil and optimism are the recurring themes in these films.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT BARBIE OF SWAN LAKE FILM

The computer animated film *Barbie of Swan Lake* was produced in 2003. The *Mattel's* version of *Swan Lake* is an entertaining film that used the scenario of Tchaikovsky's classic ballet and features his music throughout. It starts with *Kelly*, *Barbie's* younger sister, feeling uncomfortable about being at camp overnight for the first time in her life. As *Barbie* comforts her under the stars, they notice the constellation *Cygnus*. Then *Barbie* tells *Kelly* the story of *Swan Lake*, which differs from the original. The story of *Swan Lake* begins when *Odette* who works at her father's bakery shop follows a unicorn named *Lila* into an *Enchanted Forest*. There she is trapped and transformed into a swan by the evil wizard *Rothbart*, who wants to use her to defeat his enemy the *Fairy Queen*. The *Fairy Queen* partially changes the spell so that *Odette* retains her human form at night. *Odette* understands that it is her fate and duty to break the spell that has stripped the *Enchanted Forest*, and turned her friends into animals and herself into a swan. One day she meets *Prince Daniel* and fall in love for each other at first sight. When *Rothbart* informs this, he intervenes and turns the *Fairy Queen* into a mouse and transforms his daughter *Odile* to look like *Odette* in the eyes of the Prince. When the Prince realises that helps *Odette* to find a way to break the spell.

Summary of main changes in the story of *Swan Lake* made by *Mattel*:

Tchaikovsky's version

Swan Lake begins at a royal court

Odette is a swan from the beginning of the story

Odette is kidnapped by *von Rothbart*

Prince Siegfried features at the beginning of the ballet

Unhappy ending: *Odette* remains a swan and the

Prince is left alone in grief

Mattel's version

Swan Lake begins at *Odette's* village

Odette works at her father's shop

Odette follows a unicorn into an *Enchanted Forest*

Prince Daniel features after several scenes

Happy ending: *Odette* is free from the spell and gets married to the Prince

Analysis of *Barbie of Swan Lake* film

The film creates an atmosphere of innocence and adventure. *Odette* trusts and follows the unicorn. She also trusts *Prince Daniel* and balls with him. She undertakes risk in saving the *Enchanted Forest* and fight against evil. Adventure in the film is linked to recovery and consolation. *Odette's* struggle enhances emotional participation and when she succeeds, viewers may experience a sense of relief.

The film communicates a vision of a world where characters are clearly either good or evil. In this world good is rewarded and evil is punished. Symbolic personification of a bipolar division (good/evil) and contrasting values abound in the film through visual elements. Characters are associated symbolically with certain colours, lights or traits. For example, the evil is symbolised by an old, ugly wizard who transforms himself to a black bird (perhaps a raven).

Barbie of Swan Lake film offers answers to questions about love, romance, and what means to be male and female. Love and romance is central to *Odette's* life and consequently it is essential to the definition of a female. Her life appears to be fulfilled when it is in attaching to a male figure. *Odette* is portrayed as a decisive woman who wants to free herself and her friends from spells. So, she exercises agency in the development of the narrative. However, this derives from the empowerment *Prince Daniel* offers to her. It is clear that the role-model *Barbie/Odette* offers to young girls to emulate is that of a woman who lives to find love and happiness. Despite some independent attitudes she adopts, like being self-sufficient, she finds the fulfilment in romantic love. Similarly, for the main male figure in the film finding love is also desirable. *Prince Daniel* is not only a heroic man who is depicted as a soldier holding an arrow but also a man who views romance as central to his life.

Finally, as regards social and class stereotypes, the film presents a hierarchical social structure headed by men. *Prince Daniel* is a monarchical figure who will succeed his father some day and exercise authority. The change in *Odette's* social status is not based on her individual achievements but it a matter of lack. This is associated with the ideology of the 'American dream' i.e. the idea that anyone has the opportunity to achieve a better, richer, fuller life than before. A patriarchal social order is addressed through *Odette's* working status; she works in her father's bakery.



1. GENRE CHARACTERISTICS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	TEACHER KEY QUESTIONS	STUDENT ACTIVITIES
Students should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn the main characteristics of animated films, especially <i>Barbie</i> animated films, as a distinct genre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you ever watched a <i>Barbie</i> animated film? Which ones? What is the main plot line of this one? Compare it with other <i>Barbie</i> animated films? What are the differences and similarities? If you compare it with other kind of animated film what are the differences/similarities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watch an extract of <i>Barbie of Swan Lake</i> film Class discussion: key questions Small group work: list keys ideas and issues <i>Barbie</i> animated films address Role play: key characters in <i>Barbie</i> animated films (*Drama education) Small group work: brainstorm to identify similarities and differences between telenovelas

2. PRODUCTION OF *BARBIE* FILMS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	TEACHER KEY QUESTIONS	STUDENT ACTIVITIES
Students should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> learn about the production process and personnel of animated films understand how and why the makers of <i>Barbie</i> animated films recycled well-known fairytales and stories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who do you think is involved in making this animated film? Do you know what the actual work of each of the personnel involved in this production is? What kind of story did the makers use to make this film? Why do you think they selected <i>Barbie</i> to be the main character? How did the animator sketch <i>Barbie</i>? Why? What visual effects did the animator use to support the scenario? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watch the end titles of a <i>Barbie</i> animated film. Class discussion key questions Small group work: list the members and jobs of the production team Role play: imagine yourself as a member of the production team and take action (*Drama education) Write a summary of the scenario for your own animated film (*Language) Individual practical task: Design (draw) the main characters. Explain your choices in a short written comment Class discussion: reflection on the designs

3. PROMOTING & ADVERTISING *BARBIE* ANIMATED FILM

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	TEACHER KEY QUESTIONS	STUDENT ACTIVITIES
<p>Students should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn that the production process of <i>Barbie</i> animated film is linked to other media (print journalism, the Internet, TV, etc) • Understand that it is the marketing and promotion of a <i>Barbie</i> animated film that ensures its success and generates other sources of income • Understand that <i>Barbie</i> animated films function as vehicles for the marketing certain products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do magazines and newspapers write about <i>Barbie</i> animated films releases? • What kind of information is revealed on the Internet about <i>Barbie</i> animated films? • What is the purpose of advertising <i>Barbie</i> animated films on TV? • What kinds of commercials interrupt a <i>Barbie</i> film when it is shown on TV? • Who do you think selects these commercials? Why? • Are they associated with the content of the <i>Barbie</i> animated films? Give reasons for your answers. • What else do these advertisements promote? Why? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at websites for <i>Barbie</i>. List the websites in regard to their content? Present your findings in class. • Pair work: Search newspapers and magazines for information about <i>Barbie</i> animated films. List your findings. • Watch TV ads about <i>Barbie</i> animated films. Discuss your observations in class. • Individual/pair practical task: Design a website for your own animated film • Write an article about it. (* Language) • Watch extracts of TV commercials that interrupt <i>Barbie</i> animated films on TV • Class discussion: key questions • Small group work: Select commercials to interrupt your own animated films • Individual practical task: Design your own advertisement for your film. Select a time to broadcast it and briefly explain your choice (* Language).

4. AUDIENCE TARGETING

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	TEACHER KEY QUESTIONS	STUDENT ACTIVITIES
Students should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand what audiences are targeted by whom and how 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which audience do the makers of <i>Barbie</i> animated films target? Why do you think they choose this kind of audience? Why do you think someone would watch this film? Imagine that a different maker or company produced it. What would be different? What would be the same? Would the audience change if the plot or characters were different? Explain. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class discussion: key questions Pair work: Which audience would you target for your own animated film? Why? Small group/pair practical task: design the logo of your own animated film.

5. REALISM AND MYTH/FICTION IN *BARBIE* ANIMATED FILMS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	TEACHER KEY QUESTIONS	STUDENT ACTIVITIES
Students should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand how myth/fiction is constructed by animated films 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there aspects of this animated film that are realistic? Can you name some? Why do you think the maker included realistic aspects? Are there aspects of the animated film that are unreal? Why do you think the maker included them? What kinds of emotions and feelings might the audience of this telenovela share with the characters? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watch the <i>Barbie</i> animated film extract Class discussion: key questions Small group work: List similarities in the plot line of the animated film and real life Small group work: List the fictional elements in this film List some realistic and fictional elements you would include your own animated film Individual practical task: Design settings and costumes for your own animated film Class discussion: children's designs

6. CULTURAL MESSAGES IN *BARBIE* ANIMATED FILMS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	TEACHER KEY QUESTIONS	STUDENT ACTIVITIES
Students should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand that <i>Barbie</i> animated films promote certain gender representations Understand that these kinds of films communicate social and cultural messages Understand that these kinds of films influence viewers' values and beliefs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How are the men and women portrayed in this animated film? Are these representations accurate? Can you identify any values that are represented in the animated film? Which of these values do you accept or reject? Why? Does this animated film make you or young girls dream of future possibilities? What? Why/why not? Is there anything you or young girls might fantasise after watching such kinds of animated films? Why/why not? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watch the animated film extract Small group work: focus on elements of costume, make-up, gesture to suggest gender representations Class discussion: key questions Role play: boys to play the female characters of their own animated film and the opposite (*Drama education) Individual practical task: Draw yourself as one of the main characters of your own animated film. Write a brief explanation about this. List some messages that your own animated film communicates (* Social Studies)



7. INFLUENCES ON IDENTITY FORMATION

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	TEACHER KEY QUESTIONS	STUDENT ACTIVITIES
Students should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand that <i>Barbie</i> animated films might affect audiences' desires, future dreams and self-concepts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How, and to what extent is the audience influenced by the behaviour of the characters in, or the content of this animated film? How does the audience use this animated film to get advice about how to deal with conflicts in their lives? Would you want to be like any of these characters? Yes/No. Explain. Do you think that young girls dream of being like any of the characters after watching this animated film? If so, what and why? Is it possible that <i>Barbie</i> animated films contribute to young girls' plans for future life? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class discussion: key questions Interview: Ask a younger sister/cousin about how she envisions herself in the future before and after watching <i>Barbie</i> animated films. Present you findings to class. Small group work: Analyse your interview findings. Present your analysis to class. (*Language) Individual practical task: Draw a portrait of your sister/cousin's future self. Class discussion and reflection after each practical art activity



ASSESSMENT

Children's learning can be assessed/evaluated with reference to the learning objectives during lessons by:

- (i) observing their participation in discussions, art-making, role-play and oral presentations, knowledge of terms used in the lessons;
- (ii) reviewing written and visual work
- (iii) portfolio assessment
- (iv) setting multiple choice written tests

Teachers should involve students in the evaluation and assessment process also by giving them opportunities to review their work and determine what they have learned. For, example, they can be asked to evaluate their work and participation to the lessons and to fill in an '*I learned....*' statement. This will give them insights into what children think they learned during the lesson.

FOLLOW UP LESSONS

Sound and music in TV programmes, films, or even video games play a crucial role in how people make meaning of them (Duncum, 2004). The children can be asked to examine musical effects, how the sound sometimes mirrors or enhances the image, or how close-up screens are used to emphasise dialogues also. Looking at extracts from telenovelas and role-play activities can help them extend their understanding of topics examined in the lessons like the sociocultural messages these telenovelas convey.

GLOSSARY

Telenovela	Audience
Animated film	Realism
Production: director, scriptwriter, light & sound technicians, etc.	Myth/fiction
Promotion- marketing	Stereotype
Advertisement/Advertising	Values
Representation- symbol	Identity
	Sociocultural messages

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<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=flJebAJ2Bpo>

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CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I synthesise the findings of the research as a whole and try to answer the research questions. Next, I reflect on the design and methodology and examine and discuss the contribution of this study to theory and practice of art and visual culture education, and to the fields of media and visual culture studies. I also explore the implications of the findings of the study for future research, policy and practice in Greece and for my own teaching.

8.2 Answers to Research Questions and Conclusions

The long term aim of this research was to find out what kind of art curriculum content would be appropriate for introducing visual culture into Greek primary schools in such a way that it increased students understanding of ways they construct knowledge about themselves and their worlds. The research set out to answer the following questions:

1. What is the nature of a visual culture education?
2. What kind of curriculum framework is most suited to delivering visual culture education in Greek primary schools?
3. What are Greek primary age children's experiences of and preferences for visual culture and how aware are they of its impact on their lives?
4. What strategies could teachers in Greece use to help them understand the impact of visual culture on identity construction?

8.2.1 Nature of Visual Culture Education

At the beginning of the research, I was aware that art educators, especially from North America, were emphasising the need to expand the content of art education to embrace visual culture but had not systematically reviewed the literature on this topic. The literature review I conducted revealed contradictions in the ways these scholars understood the concepts of visual culture and visual culture education. Although the concept of visual culture includes the entire spectrum of material artefacts, images, time based-media, and performances in everyday life, the majority of North American educators restricted their discussion of curricula to the study of visual images from mass media and popular culture (Tavin & Hausman, 2001; Freedman, 2003b; Stokrocki, 2001, 2002; Wagner-Ott, 2002). I also discovered that some other scholars were challenging this view and adopting what they called a material culture orientation but tended to emphasise the study of three-dimensional everyday human-designed objects. Whereas North American influences dominated the international debate about visual culture education theorising I uncovered articles written by art educators in other countries such as Spain, Turkey, Brazil and China suggesting that visual culture education is becoming a global trend.

Despite the differences in how it is conceptualised, a common rationale for teaching visual culture is that it links schooling with students' visual and aesthetic experiences in everyday life. However, it is clear that in order to develop a visual culture curriculum teachers need to take into account social, historical, economic and political factors and differences in technological developments in given societies, because these determine the range of visual culture genres that learners interact with in everyday life and how they view them. On one hand, including everything that is designated as visual culture in an art curriculum gives endless possibilities to teachers to select curricula content and resources, on the other, difficult choices have to be made, as it is impossible to include every visual culture genre. Each individual teacher has to develop exclusion and inclusion criteria, therefore, with given curriculum aims in order to develop lessons that are relevant to particular sociocultural contexts and have some significance in students' lives.

The main aim of a visual culture curriculum as defined by North American art educators is to develop students' critical consciousness of how and why they look at and respond to images with a view to changing their looking practices and enabling them go beyond spontaneous impressions and superficial understanding of the messages they convey. This approach is grounded in Freire's (1974) concept of critical pedagogy, which emphasises the need for an education that empowers learners to recognise and reflect on connections between their life experiences and the social contexts in which they are embedded in order to change themselves and society. Visual culture education is in line with this as it aims to provide individual learners with the conceptual tools that will enable them become active rather than passive viewers and consumers of visual culture and change their viewing and thinking habits in order to resist manipulation by media thereby becoming more informed and active citizens in contemporary democracies.

Most of the visual culture education strategies I reviewed emphasised the lesson activity of interpretation. However, art educators like Freedman (2003a) and Duncum (2002a) have argued that art making also involves critical inquiry and reflection and that this combination can provide students with opportunities to explore also their visual experiences and self-concepts. It is clear that lessons that include both interpretation and art making support critical understanding since they can expand learner's awareness of their relationship to visual culture. Another important finding from the literature review was that North American art educators emphasised the importance of interdisciplinarity, understood as integrating teaching and learning among independent school subjects (Stokrocki, 2005). I agree with the view that an interdisciplinary curriculum could facilitate the study of visual culture in and through other school disciplines and it could provide teachers and students with opportunities to explore big themes like identity using knowledge from personal past experiences and other school subjects. However, more research is needed as to how this might take place.

I also agree with the visual culture education advocates' argument that one of the main strengths of visual culture education is that it is likely to enhance motivation and participation in lessons because the study of mass media and popular culture visual

imagery connects to students' life worlds. However, a weakness is that children may become overexposed to mass media visual images when they consume them both at home and at school. Moreover, because visual culture lessons focus on analysis of messages and meanings in mass media and popular culture images, there is a danger that teachers may project their own political and social orientations in classroom discussions and indoctrinate students to adopt their views. Reflecting on the findings of the review of literature, I concluded that visual culture education should be introduced into Greek primary schools because it uses a wider range of visual images than art education and may enhance students' understanding of there being different ways of seeing and knowing the world.

8.2.2 Introducing Visual Culture to Greek Primary Schools

Searching the World Wide Web in February 2007, my attention was caught by the title of an article about visibility and media literacy called 'The more we know the more we see' (Natharius, 2004). I suddenly realised that this notion should be at the heart of any art/visual culture curriculum I developed. The children's lives in this research were mediated through visual culture. Their interactions with visual images and three-dimensional objects in the real world they experienced and consumed while walking, studying, playing, relaxing or being entertained contributed to the construction of self-concepts, self-images and knowledge about the human-designed and natural environments they inhabited. However, their unconscious consumption and appropriation of the literal messages conveyed by visual images in the media and their inability to articulate the role visual culture played in their lives confirmed that there was a need to provide them with the skills and dispositions to move beyond passive spectatorship. I agree with Natharius (2004) that children need to be educated in art lessons to know more i.e. to see and understand more of what they actually look, gaze, glance at, observe, consume and be able to articulate this.

Offering children curricula that begin with their own visual and aesthetic experiences was a central principle in the theorising about visual culture education that informed this study from the beginning and also my 'Deconstructing Television Imagery' strategy. The choice of telenovelas and *Barbie* animated films, as curriculum content for art lessons, proved

successful because it was so relevant to the children's lives. A disadvantage, however, was that it generated a false impression in some of the children's minds that art lessons with this kind of content are only about narrating plot lines of favourite programmes. The fact that these children were not used to interpreting visual images in art lessons or doing written work negatively affected their participation. I concluded, therefore, that students must have some prior experience of interpretation of visual images and of engaging in classroom discussions about television imagery, generic characteristics of TV genres and the maker's intentions before introducing them to 'Deconstructing Television Imagery' lessons.

The definition of visual culture adopted for this study was inclusive of a range of mass-produced visual images beyond fine art. At the same time, it excluded aspects of material culture children frequently mentioned during the interviews. Restricting curriculum content to mass-produced, mass-distributed visual images limits the choice of visual culture exemplars to TV programmes, advertisements, magazines, or computer games but provides readily accessible resources for art teachers. At the end of the research, when I reflected on the theory about visual culture education, the knowledge gained from the intervention and the particularities of Greek educational and cultural context, I identified a need to revisit the definition of visual culture education I had adopted at the start (p. 47), re-frame and expand it to include fine and performing arts and material culture. Seeking for a more inclusive concept for art education to meet the interests and needs of Greek students and fill in the gaps in current practices in art education in Greece, I concluded that fine arts, mass media, popular and material culture, performing arts and the arts of spectacle should all be included. This is necessary because the entire spectrum of human-made visual images, performances, artefacts and human-designed sites embodies and perpetuates ideas that shape individuals' values, beliefs and attitudes.

At primary level, Greek art education offers a limited range of art experiences to students. Until 2003, the aim of developing children's creativity and self-expression through art making was the one most Greek teachers employed and was promoted in the national curriculum (NC, 1981). The student textbooks for art published in 2007 also invite students

to look at and discuss images mainly of Western fine art works during art-making lessons and create their own work in response to them. Teaching art for the purposes of increasing social, cultural or multicultural understanding, therefore, is neglected. However, a finding from both parts of the research was that the children were unfamiliar with original fine art works and much more familiar with mass media and popular culture imagery in everyday life. From my point of view, this implied an imbalance in their visual and aesthetic experiences. I agree with Efland (2005) that remaining indifferent to fine art works and excluding them totally from a visual culture curriculum would be detrimental because it would deprive students of access to significant visual forms with extraordinary aesthetic features and qualities that transform everyday experience of the world that human beings have created throughout ages. I concluded therefore, that including fine art in a visual culture curriculum is important, because, as Efland (*ibid*) notes, it gives students opportunities to explore distinctions between ‘elite’ art works and visual images and human-designed sites of ordinary life. Also getting students to look at examples of fine arts, interpret their meanings and analyse the contexts in which they are produced and viewed is necessary also so as to expand their understanding of the nature and functions of visual culture.

The conclusion that is necessary to include the study of three-dimensional objects in the real world in a visual culture curriculum stemmed from the children’s expressed interest in looking at the built environment around them. As Blandy & Bolin (2003) and Burkhart (2006) point out, art and generalist teachers can draw on and extend students’ experience and knowledge gained from looking at human-designed objects and sites by asking them to analyse their formal characteristics and sensory properties, compare them to other art and visual culture forms and investigate the messages they carry. I agree with Asher (2000) that including functional objects and buildings as content in art education is important because it gives students opportunities to explore their homes, the neighbourhoods in which they reside, people and communities they live with and develops an understanding of how urban and product design affects their lives. A finding from both parts of the research was that human-designed objects and sites elicit spontaneous and intuitive responses from children about their function and aesthetic qualities and generate emotion.

Therefore, including them in a visual culture curriculum could give schoolchildren in Greece more opportunities to explore how they impact on their own lives and the whole of society.

Similarly, the conclusion that is necessary to include performing arts and the arts of spectacle in a visual culture curriculum stemmed from Walker and Chaplin's argument that they constitute a part of visual culture because they appeal, though not exclusively, to the sense of vision. It also stemmed from the finding about these children's limited understanding of the social role of visual culture genres like parades/street marches. Typically, most primary age students in Greece participate in or attend performances of traditional Greek dances, shadow theatre and parades. However, the children participating in these group interviews were unaware of how parades and street marches for national celebrations contributed to the construction of their national identity. Studying these kinds of events is important because it provides students with opportunities to explore and challenge dominant beliefs about 'Greekness' and develops their understanding of how and why they are integral to the Greek history and culture. Reflecting on the 'Deconstructing Television Imagery' strategy, I concluded that it could probably be adapted and used to study all these visual culture genres (i.e. works of fine art, human-designed objects and sites and performances) because it emphasises the exploration of the messages they convey and ways they affect viewers responses and values. However, more research is needed to confirm this is the case.

The way I conceptualised visual culture education at the end of the research is compatible with the 'Cross-Curricular/Thematic Framework/ISC' (2003) proposed by the Greek Pedagogical Institute, because they both seek to expand the content of the art curriculum to include other visual culture genres beyond fine arts. The 'Cross-Curricular/Thematic Framework/ISC' promotes interdisciplinary, cross-thematic teaching and learning, which is understood as exploration of themes, like family life and the environment, examined across different school subjects. I understand visual culture education is inherently interdisciplinary in that it seeks to integrate knowledge from learners' life experiences and knowledge gained from school subjects like social studies, history, language,

environmental; studies, drama education, religion, or even maths. The concept of critical pedagogy that emphasises learning how to reflect on ways in which knowledge and meanings are constructed from students' life experiences also needs to be infused in all school subjects in the Greek primary education not just art. My vision of visual culture education as forming a nexus between society, culture and school reflects both my current understanding of recent international developments in the field of art education and the need to reform Greek art education to respond to the social, technological, and economic changes in society that fundamentally affect Greek students' lives. However, this study is only a starting point for further research and curriculum development on this topic.

8.2.3 Visual Experiences of Primary Age Children

The children in Greece who participated in the first part of the research were familiar with the 21 visual culture genres included in the research tool. It was clear that they lived in and interacted with a world saturated by both globalised mass media images and images that are specific to Greek culture, including for example images of films, animated cartoons, TV programmes, carnivals, religious icons, and parades/street marches. This supports the widely held view that, in contemporary societies, visual imagery is the most pervasive form through which people communicate, acquire knowledge, access the past, and come to understand themselves, others and their words, although this may be tacit (Sturken & Cartwright, 2001; Rogoff, 1998, 2000; Barnard, 2001). The implication, therefore, for art and generalist teachers in Greece is that they should help students to make some of this tacit knowledge explicit in order to improve their understanding of how they interact with visual culture and how it influences their perceptions and desires

The children participating in this research told me that the visual images they experienced most often were of the built environment. No doubt they associated looking at shop windows, signs, roads, monuments and buildings while they walked around the city/town with acquiring first hand knowledge of the built environment and their life in cities and towns. However, it was not clear whether they realised that when they looked at or observed the built environment, they were also exploring and interpreting its meaning in their minds (*flânerie*; Benjamin, 1983). They also told me they often represented aspects of

the built environment in their drawings/paintings they did at home or school. It is possible that looking at specific sites and locations in the built environment afforded them aesthetic experiences and conveyed personal meanings. Unfortunately, it was not possible to explore this further during the group interviews or to ascertain if looking at neighbourhood settings through the windows of a house or passing car offers a more or less intense experience than looking at them while walking. However, it is reasonable to assume that these children formed emotional bonds, known as ‘place attachments’ with particular sites (neighbourhood, local market, parks, and roads) because of everyday interactions and past memories associated with them (Gifford, 2002; Lippard, 1997; Klein, 2000; Waxman, 2003).

The other images they told me they experienced a lot were on television. It was clear that they did not distinguish between visual experiences of looking at urban landscapes in the real world and from visual experiences of second-hand representations of reality on television. However, the children participating in the intervention were able to explain some difference between real life and constructed realism in TV, because they explained that TV programmes simulate family and social environments and human relationships. It was not clear to what extent they perceived the visual experiences they derived from the built environment and television viewing as the same or different. However, I gained the impression that the reason they talked in a uniform manner about them both was that the built environment and television were readily available and accessible to them and generated an emotional response. I concluded that it is important to get learners to examine ways in which they perceive reality and simulations of reality in art lessons and there is a need to expand their awareness of how and why mass media in consumer societies (including television, film and magazines) replace reality with representations and symbols.

8.2.4 Children’s Preferences for Visual Culture Genres

As expected the children participating in the interviews said they preferred looking at visual images from popular and mass media culture, and especially from television. Age, gender and individual interests influenced their preferences. They explained that pleasure

they derived from it and entertainment were the main reasons for watching television. It was clear that the opportunity to experience increased engagement and emotional involvement with the plot lines and characters in TV programmes was another reason they liked watching them. These children also pointed out that TV comedies, dramas, and animated cartoons stimulated their imagination and offered them a sense of excitement and relief from boredom.

During the intervention, it became clear that the children's preferences for specific kinds of TV genres and imagery changed with age. The older children, aged between 10 and 12, preferred TV programmes targeted at general audiences that informed them about the adult world and ways of dealing with real-life situations. It was also apparent that loyalty to certain TV programmes and regularity of viewing determined their preferences. Availability and broadcasting times of TV programmes also played an important role in their choices and inclinations. The fact that most TV programmes are discontinued and replaced by others after a certain period of time causes adjustments in preference. All these factors should be taken under consideration when teachers try to develop lessons based on children's preferences among popular mass media images.

8.2.5 Children's Awareness of the Impact of Visual Culture on their Lives

The children in this research consumed a variety of mass media visual images communicating ideals of beauty, desire and glamour, socio-cultural values and norms and gender and social class stereotypes. They were aware that they appropriated this kind of information from TV programmes, magazines and console games and used it for the purposes of collective interaction and talk, drawing/painting and role-play. This finding confirms ideas in the literature that children negotiate and corroborate the role models visual imagery provides and use them to make sense of themselves and their worlds (Toku, 2001, 2004; Wilson, 1997, 1999; Duncum, 1997b; Anning & Ring, 2004; Marsh, 1999; 2000; Singer & Singer, 1981). Whereas the children, aged between 10 and 12, recognised that visual culture offered them role models to observe and emulate, they lacked the conceptual tools to reflect on how they actually affected their future dreams and desires.

Nor could they fully understand how they assimilated and exploited messages and meanings in visual imagery.

The children participating in the intervention understood that TV imagery nourished their desire to achieve social status, power and money, and look beautiful (like actors/actresses), or have ideal physical characteristics (muscles, or thin bodies). They were able to describe such fantasies and identify specific television programmes that influenced them. It was clear from their comments in both parts of the research that they engaged in self-image comparison with media-defined aesthetic ideals. However, none of them could understand how these comparisons affected the formation of their self-image and self-esteem. Because the children pointed out that TV programmes provided them with information about patterns of lifestyle, consumption and commodities (like cars and clothes) that they desired to own, it was clear that they understood that TV imagery contributes to consumer socialisation. As Sturken & Cartwright (2001) and Barnard (1995) note an individual's consumption and use of commodities is determined by a consumer identity that is formed and influenced by popular and mass media imagery over time. However, I was not able to establish if these children understood this.

Talking with these children about the messages TV imagery conveyed revealed that they were able to identify 'preferred readings' of programmes and films. It was apparent that they accepted the behavioural codes or morals about what is right or wrong that telenovelas and *Barbie films* communicated without questioning them. They appeared to process much of the information from favourite programmes and films unconsciously perhaps because they were overwhelmed by them. It seems that emotional engagement may hinder reflection on the messages being conveyed in programmes and films they watch. Also their understanding of TV as a medium that specifically geared towards relaxation, pleasure, entertainment and fun mediated against their looking at TV imagery with a critical eye. This led to misconceptions and false judgements about American lifestyles and characteristics of people from socioeconomic backgrounds that were different from their own.

8.2.6 Improving Children's Understanding of the Impact of Visual Culture on their Identity Construction

Visual culture curricula aim to develop understanding of the way individuals' appropriate or adopt representations from visual imagery to shape their own self-concepts. A finding from both parts of the research was that these children were not able to fully conceptualise identity. This along with their inability to critically inquire into, challenge and reflect on information gained through their visual experiences of mass media and popular culture suggests that age and developmental level are important factors to take into account when designing visual culture curricula. The findings of the review of literature about identity and evaluation of the intervention were that children aged between 10 and 12 are able to understand aspects of self, such as their cognitive capabilities, physical attributes, emotional states and dreams and aspirations and explore specific self-concepts regarding their social character (their perceptions of how they are regarded by others) and self-ideals (how they would like to be). However, they could not understand the elusive concept of identity per se because it is complex, multidimensional and abstract.

A finding of part two of this research was that focusing lessons on personal aspects of identity, such as dreams and aspirations of future life possibilities, enabled the students discuss ways they exercised it. As for example when they imitated role models seen in mass media imagery or dressed up and behaved in certain ways. Getting them to envision future possibilities and ways they were affected by mass media and popular culture images was a start to increasing their understanding of the concept of identity. The selected exemplars of visual culture, a telenovela and animated film, were appropriate choices of curriculum content because the children were eager to discuss preferences for their characters and wishful identifications with them. This discussion along with a practical art activity, in which they drew/painted their future selves, enabled to gain insights into ways TV programmes influenced their dreams and desires. Dealing effectively with the theme of 'future self' necessitates teachers choosing appropriate curriculum content and resources that highlight the effect of TV imagery on children's aspirations and dreams.

Reflecting on the intervention, I concluded that asking students to explore stereotypical gender roles and symbols of social status depicted in selected visual imagery and to compare them with personal own drawings/paintings has the potential to enhance their understanding of how they appropriate and exploit them. Critical examination of the notion of ‘future self’ in art lessons also has the potential to increase children’s self-understanding and ability to make meaning derived from everyday visual experiences from mass media and popular culture. Representations of ‘future selves’ contain conscious or unconscious links with previous visual experiences that can be explored through classroom discussions. However, the evaluation of the intervention in this research showed that conceptualising and exploring identity must be a long-term learning objective. I concluded that interdisciplinary projects that integrate teaching and learning among school subjects could facilitate exploration of national, ethnic and personal aspects of identity so that children understand its multiple dimensions. Interdisciplinary projects can give students and teachers opportunities to apply and utilise knowledge gained through other school subjects to an art lesson and to explore the theme of identity in more depth. For example, the study of religious icons and devotional practices in and through art and religion subject could enable students in Greece understand the role of religious symbols in religious identity formation. I concluded also that teaching about identity benefits from self-reflective art-based activities like making self-portraits, altering self-images and keeping visual diaries. These kinds of art activities can enhance learners’ understanding of ways in which they internalise social and cultural norms, values and beliefs that visual images convey.

8.3 Reflection on Research Methodology

My journey through this study was in no way a spectacular, joyful trip; it was a slow, lonely process. I found it stressful when the design of the research and choice of methodology had to be changed. The original research proposal, dated April 2005 specified a multi-method approach to collecting and analysing data with two interrelated parts, a survey questionnaire and one cycle of action research. Because Greek primary teachers were unwilling to undertake the action research, the methodology changed to curriculum development and evaluation. The time needed to complete it was the main reason why I decided to carry out only a preliminary research into children’s preferences

for and attitudes towards visual culture using group interviews and teachers' needs for teaching it by conducting a questionnaire survey. The last change I made happened after I had analysed the interview data. At this point, the questionnaire survey was replaced by a 'thematic' case study of a curriculum intervention, because issues from the group interviews required further investigation. Because of all these changes, I studied a variety of research methods such as action research, curriculum development and evaluation, questionnaire survey, group interviews, and case studies. Ultimately, this has benefited me as a researcher.

As is always the case in research, the methodology employed had strengths and weaknesses. The group interviews gathered descriptive information about primary age children's preferences at a particular point in time and thereby enabled me to determine the content of the lesson unit. They also provided useful insights into primary age children's preferences for visual culture genres and understanding of visual imagery as learning resource. Their conversational form facilitated interactions between group members and elicited a range of opinions and views. As the interviewer, I had to learn to exercise skills in managing group dynamics, maintaining group members' attention and keeping the pace for each interview. However, a major weakness of group interviews was that they did not provided sufficient data regarding children's understanding of the impact of visual culture on their own lives. I suspect that conducting multiple sets of interviews with the same group of children might have facilitated this.

The decision to show representative examples of 21 visual culture genres made for the purpose of helping them understand the term 'visual image' ('εικόνα') and consequently the interview content was a good one. Although the term 'visual image' is central to visual culture theory, it proved to be too sophisticated for use in the group interviews with children of this age in Greece. The data analysis revealed that children did not distinguish between visual experiences from second-hand reality representations and real life. The fact that the tool included representations of buildings, crafts, toys, performances, street parades, carnivals, athletic events, TV programmes, and animated cartoons encouraged children to talk about these genres per se. On reflection, I should have asked them to

further explain their accounts about visual images, when they observed real life sites like roads and shop windows and at simulations they told me they looked at often or preferred.

The choice of a ‘thematic’ case study for the design of the educational intervention in the second part of the research was beneficial to me personally in that it functioned as a form of professional development. This intervention cannot be repeated exactly the same way because of the particularities of the school context, the classes and my own performance as a teacher/researcher. Although this decreases the reliability and validity of the case study, information about the school, characteristics and population of the classes included in this thesis and systematic and detailed reports of lessons made it transparent so that other researchers could conduct similar studies. Also, triangulation of data increased its trustworthiness. Limitations of time determined the outcomes. I suspect that spending more time in the classroom with these children would have produced different results. I understand that the findings described in the thesis are derived from only a small sample of primary age students and do not allow for generalisations. But I hope the report will give other educators insights into how they can use visual images from television and animated films in their lessons. The teacher resource pack I developed called ‘Deconstruction Television Imagery’ is included in the thesis and is available for use as a model for developing lesson plans for teaching about TV programmes, films or advertisements or other genres of visual culture.

8.4 Contribution of the Study to Knowledge of Art and Visual Culture Education

Visual culture education as reform movement has been in place less than a decade in the USA, and curriculum models are still under development. There is on-going dialogue among professionals around the globe about the theoretical foundations of this model and the content and aims of visual culture curricula. This research contributes to this dialogue in that it offers a perspective from outside the North American educational system. I agree in principle with the aims for and content of visual culture education suggested by North American art educators. However, the implementation of the visual culture project I developed revealed that content and aims should be adapted to fit the particularities of particular educational systems, schools or classes. I consider the curriculum I have

proposed to be a realistic vision in that it responds to the particularities of Greek primary art education.

The detailed report on the design and implementation of the intervention offers an approach using telenovelas and *Barbie* animated films to enhance children's understanding of the way these visual culture genres influence their dreams about future possibilities. It enhances international literature in that it provides an instructional resource that has been tested out in practice and outlines the conditions that are necessary for implementing visual culture curricula. Also it can be used for comparisons with other curriculum examples developed by art educators elsewhere. The revised 'Deconstructing Television Imagery' resource pack serves as a practical function for teachers in Greece and elsewhere, or can provide them with ideas to develop similar lesson units.

The research offers insights into the Greek art education and recent curriculum reform that aids curriculum developers in Greece or researchers globally who wish to conduct comparative educational studies. Information about primary age children's preferences for visual culture genres, ways of looking, and their understanding of visual culture as a learning resource may be of interest to scholars of visual communication, education and visual culture studies as well as art education and contribute to cross-cultural or comparative cultural theory in that it communicates particular characteristics of Greek visual culture. The detailed information about telenovelas and analysis of *Anipotaktes Kardies* included in the 'Deconstructing Television Imagery' resource pack may contribute to knowledge about this genre and be of use to scholars in mass media and television studies. Literature on *Barbie* animated films was extremely limited at the time the research was conducted. Therefore, the contribution of this research to knowledge about this particular visual culture genre is significant.

8.5 Suggestions for Future Research

From the results of this study it is apparent that more research needs to be conducted to develop theory and practice of visual culture education. Suggestions are as follows:

- Ethnic, regional and cultural particularities may affect interpretation of mass media images circulated globally. These children's verbal accounts did not indicate how they interpreted visual images produced outside Greece. So, more investigation is needed into ways such cultural particularities affect children's interpretations.
- The concept of the 'gaze' has been extensively theorized in visual culture theory (Sturken & Cartwright, 2001). The children in this study clearly associated the act of looking with pleasure and to a lesser extent with desire, but it was not possible to determine the particularities of their gaze or modes of spectatorship as regards the different visual culture genres. So, further investigation into this is required.
- The literature review suggested that people mediate their lives through images that dominate contemporary societies and cultures (Sturken & Cartwright, 2001; Garoian & Gaudelius, 2004). The children in this study mentioned representations and real life objects or sites as if they were the same thing. It was not possible to determine if they were confused or unable to distinguish between them. Further investigation into children's understanding of representation and simulation and relations between the two is necessary.
- The children in this research were fascinated by the kinds of lifestyles promoted by media images and celebrity culture. Further investigation is needed about ways they perceive images of lifestyles, if and how they compare them with their own family lives, and about the role of peer cultures in their appropriation. Findings of such a research would enable teachers to develop visual culture curricula to increase students understanding of this.
- The children in this study had difficulty understanding the concept of identity. Further investigation is needed about what kind of art education strategies will help students understand ways in which their identities are formed visually.
- The evaluation of practical art activities suggested the use of computer technology as a research tool and for creative purposes in visual culture lessons to enhance students' learning. Further research is needed to establish how they can be incorporated in teaching about visual culture in Greek schools.
- This research did not inquire into Greek primary teachers' views and attitudes about visual culture education as planned. An investigation into this topic would be

worthwhile because it would reveal their preconceptions and concerns, if any, about teaching visual culture education.

8.6 Implications for Greek Educational Policy and Practice

Reflecting on the findings of this study led me to make tentative recommendations for actions by Greek policy makers and generalist teachers. I also reflected on the implications of the research for my own teaching and future plans.

8.6.1 Proposals for Greek Policy Makers

Visual Culture Education Reform

The recent curriculum reform in Greece is evidence that art education may be going through a significant period of change, particularly as student textbooks have been published and distributed to schools for first time. However, the research found that these books did not introduce visual culture genres other than fine arts (painting and sculpture). Moreover, they promote a formalist and modernist approach to art education rather than a postmodernist one. In my view, Greek art education should adapt to the needs of pluralistic, post-industrialised societies by introducing visual culture education theory and practice. This implies that policy makers have to revise the current curriculum, and especially student textbooks, to promote visual literacy and embrace the notion of critical pedagogy in order to help students understand the social and cultural worlds they live in and ways they construct self-concepts. Changing the Greek curriculum this way is dependent on policy decisions at governmental level. However, there is an urgent need for this kind of reform and for enforcing social and cultural aims for art education.

Art Timetable

Timetabling for art was one issue that arose during the evaluation of the intervention. The time limits for the average teaching session in Greek primary school were 40/45 minutes. They proved to be inadequate for implementing a visual culture project. It would be useful if art sessions were organised over two continuous teaching periods (90 minutes). This kind of arrangement would provide more time for teachers to engage students in interpretation of visual images, practical art activities and evaluation and reflection of

individual or group work. It would also encourage experimentation with a range of media and techniques (clay, computer art, acrylics) and alternative learning activities like role play, producing scenarios, and costume design. Because visual culture education is inherently interdisciplinary the time allocated for 'Flexible Zone' by the Greek curriculum could be used for teaching it.

Materials and Resources

This study revealed a lack of computer technology and electronic equipment (video/DVD players, projectors) in school C. Before visual culture reform can be implemented resource supplies for all public schools would have to be improved. However, because the Greek state currently invests only the 3,5 % of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in education per annum (OECD, 2007, p. 194) it is unrealistic to expect much improvement in this soon. The fact that private donation or parents' contributions to schools are not allowed by the Greek Constitution and laws further exacerbates the situation.

Guidance and Support

Previous research has indicated there is a lack of teacher support in Greek art education (Christopoulou, 2004; Labitsi, 2000). This study also revealed inadequacies in the student textbooks for teaching about visual culture. There is a need for the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs to take action to improve this perhaps by training art co-ordinators or specialist advisors to help teachers organise and implement visual culture curricula. Moreover, a revision of the current student textbooks for art to include visual culture lessons based on ideas in the international literature would aid generalist primary teachers. A recommendation arising from this research is that in-service training should cover practical content and theory in art/visual culture education and be organised by the Greek Pedagogical Institute or local Educational Offices. This kind of training could raise teachers' awareness of the aims and functions of visual culture education and assist them in implementing visual culture curricula.

8.6.2 Recommendations for Greek Generalist Teachers

In the introduction, it was pointed out that there is a lack of experimental work, curriculum research and specialist art education journals in Greece. Thus, it is likely that generalist

primary teachers are unaware of visual culture education theory. Because guide books with lesson plans and resources for teaching about visual culture do not exist at the moment in Greece teachers who wish to teach about visual culture genres other than fine arts will have to design and develop their own curricula.

The research showed that the design and development of the ‘Deconstructing Television Imagery’ lesson unit required a search for available curriculum examples in books, specialist art journals and the Internet. As my knowledge about telenovelas and animated films was limited I had to research information about these genres. The internet search engines www.google.com, www.google.com/scholar, www.altavista.com, and www.search.com proved to be useful tools for this and enabled me identify relevant articles in online journals, such as *Global Media Journal*, or sites like www.mediaculture-Online.de. Information about telenovela *Anipotaktes Kardies (Rebelde Way)* and *Barbie of Swan Lake* animated film was available at Wikipedia (www.wikipedia.org) and *Mattel’s* websites (<http://barbie.everythinggirl.com>, <http://uk.barbie.com>). Other teachers could follow similar steps to design and develop visual culture projects. Developing a research mentality is, therefore, a prerequisite for designing curricula and projects about visual culture at last in Greece.

8.6.3 Implications for my Own Practice

This study was an important personal achievement because it extended my thinking about educational research methods and methodologies and curriculum development. I had to connect my student, teacher, researcher and artist identities in order to design, implement, evaluate and revise the ‘Deconstructing Television Imagery’ resource pack. The design of the visual research tool and ‘Deconstructing Television Imagery’ lesson unit was creative and was the part I enjoyed most. Bringing together experiences I gained from living and working in the different cultural contexts of Greece and the UK enabled me see art teaching in Greek primary schools with a more critical eye. Despite the tensions I felt, undertaking the role of teacher/researcher, the research process was compatible with teaching and had a positive impact on my development as a teacher. Among the most significant changes in my practice during the intervention was that I became more

organised and structured and improved my reflection and evaluation skills. Reflecting systematically on my teaching, enabled me to question my practice regarding the choice of the curriculum content, ways I tried to motivate the children and the guidance I offered them to extend their thinking. Furthermore, my knowledge about computer technology was increased as I learned to manipulate data using Atlas-ti software and visual material using Adobe Photoshop and Microsoft Office Picture Manager.

I anticipate that the knowledge and experience I gained from this study will inform and enhance my practice working as an art teacher, educational advisor and researcher. To further develop my own teaching and understanding of visual culture education I intend to embrace the teacher/researcher model again and implement the revised ‘Deconstructing Television Imagery’ lesson unit in a class next year. I also plan to design, implement, and evaluate more lesson units about visual culture education. I plan to include computer technology in my lessons as a research tool and for creative purposes in order to enhance student motivation, learning and engagement in practical art activities. An effort will be made to publish this resource pack as an e-book and communicate the research findings in articles in Greek and international educational journals and at conferences in the hope this will contribute to the development of visual culture education. Finally, I will try to establish contact with the educational advisors and Education Offices in Athens and request that they organise workshops or seminars to inform Greek teachers about visual culture education and the findings of this research.

GLOSSARY

Critical pedagogy is one of main concepts of visual culture education. It is understood as a form of critical reflection on the practices of looking at, responding and appropriating visual culture that can lead to critical consciousness (Tavin, 2003; Park, 2006; Heise 2004).

Deconstruction in this research is understood as a teaching and learning process, in which teachers get learners to: (i) look at and describe visual images that have been selected for study; (ii) reflect on the pleasure they derived from looking at and experiencing them; (iii) participate in class discussion about how and why viewers and individuals perceive visual imagery differently; (iv) examine ways in which visual images in mass-media contribute to identity construction, and (v) create visual images themselves to represent, explore and construct their personal identities. This model draws on Alvermann & Hagood (2000); Motomura (2003) and Chung's (2007) ideas on how to explore, interpret and analyse mass media imagery in art and mass media education. It is different from the notion of deconstruction in visual semiotics in that the latter is understood as an analysis of visual elements of images, which form signs, symbols and meanings, to reveal hidden ideological assumptions (Rose, 2001).

Gaze is a term commonly used by scholars in visual culture, film and media studies to describe acts of looking. It is linked to desire and fantasy (Sturken and Cartwright, 2001)

Genre: The term genre in this research refers to the classification of cultural products into particular types with distinct characteristics (Sturken and Cartwright, 2001).

Identity: A person's identity is understood to constitute a mix of local, regional, geographic, national, ethnic, cultural, and personal components. Identities are also understood to be constructed over extensive periods of time. They are ever changing in the sense that individuals/learners update them as they move through psychological and cognitive stages of development, or different parts of their lives and encounters with significant others (Ballengee-Morris & Stuhr, 2001; Kellner, 1995; Freud, 2001).

Interdisciplinarity: An interdisciplinary curriculum is one that deliberately integrates knowledge from several school subjects/disciplines and makes connections with knowledge gained from experiences inside and outside school (Efland *et al*, 1996; Freedman, 2003c; Ulbricht, 1998).

Telenovelas are melodramatic fictional series made for television that have their roots in radio soaps produced in the USA in 1940s. The majority are produced in Latin American countries. They have clear-cut plot lines with definite endings that permit narrative closure and usually last for six months to one year. Typically, telenovelas narrative relies on melodrama in which a romantic couple confront opposition to their staying together. However, more recently some telenovelas deal with controversial social issues that are closer to real life, like drug abuse, abortion, corruption, homosexuality, cloning, environmental issues, racism, and urban violence (Rêgo, 2003; La Pastina, 2006; Acosta-Alzuru, 2003).

Visual culture in this study is defined as the entire spectrum of visual images from fine and performing arts, crafts and design and material, popular and mass-media culture (Barnard, 2001; Walkler & Chaplin, 1997).

Visual culture education was defined in the beginning of this research as education that focuses on the study of mass-produced and popular culture images. At the end of the research, it was redefined to mean the study of visual images, artefacts, sites, performances and artworks that permeate learners' everyday life and contribute to shaping their beliefs, attitudes, values and identities.

Visual Image: One of the surprising findings of the review of literature was that there was any definition for the term visual image, although scholars in visual culture studies and visual culture education widely use it. In this research, it is understood as the object of a person' gaze that generates emotions and meanings.

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